THE SAGA OF BANGLA DESH

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JAMNA DAS
'AKHTAR

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About This Book

The unprecedented carnage in Bangla Desh has come as a rude shock to the civilised world familiar as it is with mass slaughters of whole populations in some of the wars of attrition going on today The planned genocide by the West Pakistani armies of occupation surpasses the brutality and carnage indiscriminately practised by Chengez Khan Hitler and others Compared to what has happened and is happening in Bangla Desh—only a few glimpses of which have come out in newspaper correspondents reports—the communal slaughter in Biafra and mass murders in My lai which shocked world opinion pale into insignificance The genocide in Bangla Desh is selective and aimed at creating a vacum in leadership at all levels through total extermination of intellectuals—professors university students political workers leaders of public opinion professional people with influence among the masses like doctors engineers lawyers business enterpreneurs industrialists and others to forestall the emergence of a unified and well-organised mass uprising against General Yahya Khan s army of occupation

Another aim of this mass killing and squeezing out of millions of Bengali citizens is to turn the majority into a minority so that West Pakistanis could take over Bangla Desh in the name of democracy

The first phase of the battle of survival by the democratic forces of Bangla Desh constituted spontaneous though unorganised mass confrontation against the well prepared invader who had utilised the period of the so-called political

negotiations to plan a simultaneous and many sided lightning thrust to perpetuate its stronghold on the eastern wing and throttle the voice of rebellion The Pak Army despite its threats while succeeding in occupying some urban centres has left a whole countryside under the undisputed sway of freedom fighters Thus with the onset of the monsoon in riverine tracks and swampy marshlands of Bangla Desh the army of occupation which is already cut off from its supply bases through destruction of bridges railways etc by the Liberation Forces will be hard put to it to avoid its destruction through starvation sabotage and attacks by emerging guerilla bands It has been surrounded on all sides by a hostile population with all avenues of trade and industry in Bangla Desh virtually closed on which the economy of Pakistan depended for its life and sustenance How much longer the cracking economy of West Pakistan will be able to stand the crushing burden of occupation of Bangla Desh is anybody s guess

This book brings to light some significant facts about the battle of freedom of Bangla Desh with a full background historical and political data and the various forces involved in this historic struggle

I take this opportunity to acknowledge sincere help and advice ungrudgingly given by way of useful suggestions by my old journalist colleague H C Chaddha and Rajendra Sharma of M/S Oriental Publishers in preparing this work I have also to render my grateful thanks to Mr Frank Moraes Shri Dilip Mukerjee and Diwan Birendra Nath on whose writings and articles I have drawn in writing this book

JAMNA DAS AKHTAR

Delhi
June 15 1971

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Come out of your hou es with what ever weapons you hav Resi t the enemy forces at any co t until the last enemy soldier is vanquished and ave the country from the ruthless dictatorship of West Pakistanis

—Sh ikh Mujibur Rehman
President Bangla Desh

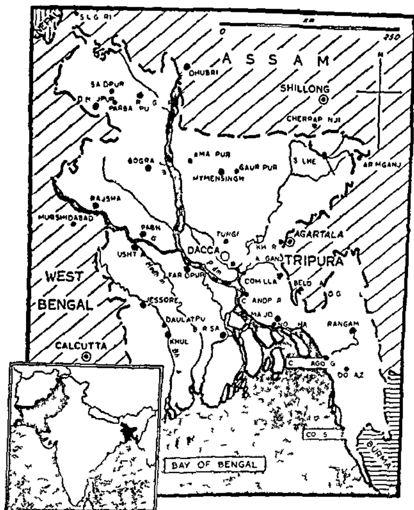
Th man and his pa ty are enemies of Islam The crime will not go unpun ished We will not allow som power hungry and unpatriotic peo le to de troy this country and play with the destiny of 120 million people

—Mohammed Yahya Khan
President Pakistan









Bangla Desh with a population of over 75 million people and an area of 50 thousand square miles is surrounded on three sides by Indian States of West Bengal Assam and Tripura For the last 23 years West Pakistan s military rulers treated this land as their colony Their patience exhausted the peopl dec lared Bangla D sh an independ nt country on 26th March 71

বাংলা দেশের সাতকোটি মানুষের সার্বিক
মুক্তির জন্য আমাদের এবারের এই সংগ্রাম। অধিকার
আদায়ের না হওয়া পর্যন্ত সংগ্রাম চলবে।
বুলেট বন্দুক বেয়নেট দিয়ে বাংলা দেশের মানুষের
আর স্তব্ধ করা যাবেনা। কেননা জনতা আজ
ঐক্যবদ্ধ।

লক্ষ্য অর্জনের জন্য যে কোন ত্যাগ স্বীকারের
আমাদের প্রস্তুত থাকতে হবে। ঘরে ঘরে গড়ে তুলতে
হবে প্রতিরোধের দুর্গ। আমাদের দাবী ন্যায় সংগত।
তাই সাফল্য আমাদের সুনিশ্চিত।

জয় বাংলা। শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান

১৯।৩।৭১

ENGLISH VERSION

This struggle for ours is of the complete liberation of seventy million people of Bangla Desh. Our struggle will go on until our rights are secured The people of Bangla Desh will no longer be cowed down by bullets guns and bayonets for today the people are united

We must be ready for any sacrifice in order to achieve our goal Every home must be turned into a fortress of resistance Ours is a just demand So we are sure to win.

Joi Bangla

19 3-71 *Sheikh Mujibur Rehman*



Militry D t t A ul Kh n w is frighten d of th tud nts r volt in D a In D mber 68 wh n h addr l a m ting th r only h s r l (B low) Angry d mon trators on th top of t tirit roof in Dacca



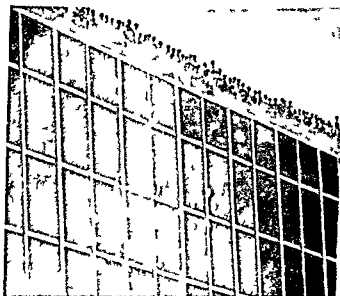


Lat Maharaj Tralokya Nath Chak rabarty (*Right*) with Mujib s nearest collegue Pulin D y (*Left*) Young and determind Mujib with the Lion of Bengal Fazlul Huq an advocate of free B ngal who was dismissed as a Chief Minister by West Pakistan rulers in 1954

Mujib with Khan Abdul Wali Khan (*Left*) in Dacca on 14th March 71 The meeting took place at Mujib s re idence when Yahya Khan mischieviously extended the parleys on one hand and called in military rienforce ment on the oth r



M l tı y D ctator A ul Kl ı as fr ght ned of t stud nt r olt n Dacca In D mbcr 68 wh n l addr ed a me ng th re only l s v v r bl (*B low*) Angry d mon tr tors on tl top of ret at of in Dacca





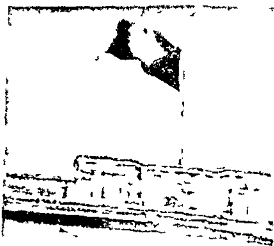


Late Maharaj Tralokya Nath Chakrabarty (*Right*) with Mujib's nearest collegue Pulin Dey (*Left*) Young and determined Mujib with the Lion of Bengal Fazlul Huq an advocate of free Bengal who was dismissed as a Chief Minister by West Pakistan rulers in 1954

Mujib with Khan Abdul Wali Khan (*Left*) in Dacca on 14th March 71 The meeting took place at Mujib's residence when Yahya Khan mischievously extended the parleys on one hand and called in military rienforcement on the other



BanglaJD sh Govt took oath of offi e in th second week of [April 1971 Pi ture shows (*Left to right*) Acting Pr ident Syed Nazrul Islam Prime Minister Tajuddin Ahmad Capt Man oor Ali and A H Kamruzamma



The Deputy High Commissioner of Paki tan in Calcutta Mr Ho sain Ali denounced Paki tan attack and d clared his aligi nce to Bangla D sh He hoisted the flag of Bangla Desh (*Left*) on the H gh Commis ion Building in Cal utta The mi sion has nce started functioning for Bangla Desh



Pak stan sol1 e s burnt dow v ll es after v llage The p ctu e above shows a hous bu nt t Fuler Ha Jes o e The boat symbol and slogan of Mu b s Party ar een on he rema ns of the bu ld ng

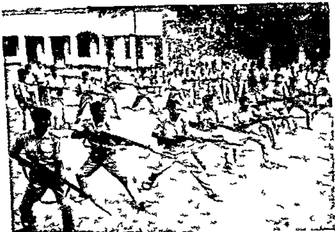


Pak s an sold ers d d not spare even places of worsh p P ctur above shows rema ns of a Mosque n Jessore



Som where n Bangla Desh Mukt Fauj oldi rs are bu y manufacturing handgrenad s (*below*) Another les on in gun firing for Mukti Fauj s ldi r





Short of arm amunition and un form all young Bengalis started extensive tra ning n war tacti s simpl to get their country free from the We t Paki tani invaders









Prime M nister Mrs Indira Gandhi is s en here consolu g a boy wounded by Pak stani bullets (*below*) the Prime Minister dis tributing meals to the refuggees West B ngal Chief Minister Ajoy Mukherjee is al o seen in the picture

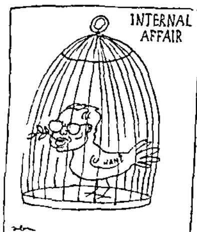




A thre member U N team for r fugee rehab l tat on v s t d New D lhi in the m ddl of May Leader of tl del gat on Mr Charles Mace s in the centre



A g rl n ar na ra ng her tal of wo to the P M —she lo t her parent



Insp e of tron pre sure from the world Pre s and mpor ant leaders *th U N and th b g three nat ons* could not persuad Yahya Khan to top th k ll ngs n Bangla D sh Th l nce of th world body b ought th s m aningful caricature of S y Gen U Thant from Mr Abu Cartoor t The Indian Express

The Language of a Dictator

It was a fateful night

With the awesome fury of a cyclone off the Bay of Bengal the Pakistani army swept across East Bengal The Military Dictator had declared war against the unarmed Bengalis whose only crime was that they had refused to remain slave under the colonial rule of West Pakistan s military leaders They had demanded restoration of democracy in Pakistan and complete internal autonomy for their province

Dubbing the Bengali leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his followers as traitors and enemies of Pakistan the Dictator ordered his commanders to crush the democratic movement with all the force at their disposal The blood thirsty wolves from West Punjab pounced upon peace-loving Bengalis Tanks rolled on to trample innocent men women and children Machine guns mounted upon armoured cars and jeeps mowed down hundreds of people Cannons started firing indiscriminately Army men attacked the Dacca University hostel from all sides Flame-throwers were used to burn the building along with its inmates Anyone who tried to escape was shot dead Then leaving the hostel behind up in flames the army men turned to the distinguished Professors of the University and made a clean sweep of them

indiscriminately Within a few hours the Dacca University with its imposing structure and sprawling green lawns lay reduced to ashes.

While the announcer of the Dacca Betar Kendra formerly Dacca Radio Station shouted *Jai Bangla* (victory to Bengal) after announcing the establishment of a Free and Sovereign State of Bengal a group of blood thirsty soldiers broke into the premises after killing the guards and without giving any warning mowed down the announcer and other members of the staff The murderers cried Long live Pakistan long live Islam'

While the city lay burning the ghastly role of Nero was being re enacted in Islamabad The Director was sipping whisky According to an eye-witness the whole of Dacca town and its suburbs were the scene of the army's wanton and almost unchallenged atrocities The army gave no warning before indulging into butchery The brutalities that the West Pakistan army unleashed were grimmer than that had happened at My Lai (South Vietnam)

All told it was more than a disastrous cyclone Guns were booming Machine guns cracked and clattered Tanks rattled along with defeaning sound Everywhere innocent people were being butchered The Rajbagh Police Station was razed to the ground Any policeman who resisted was captured and hanged by a lamp post Innocent fire brigade men were lined up and sprayed with bullets The New Market was burnt down and innumerable charred bodies lay scattered like burnt logs The large bustee near the Iqbal Hall was totally gutted Tanks surrounded it and it was set on fire Several thousand slum dwellers were roasted alive The Aulat Market was razed to the ground In the industrial areas of Tongi labourers were dragged out of their houses and gunned The Army Commander cried I shall crush the traitors Anybody who raises the slogan of independence will be slaughtered These are my orders and my boys are out to implement them

To freedom loving people all over the world Bangla Desh was undergoing a blood-bath People were being massacred all over the State All this however did not strike strange to those who knew the language and behaviour of dictators especially the rulers of Pakistan who had always looked at their people with contempt Their hatred towards the Bengalis was too well-known

In July 1948 a few months after the establishment of Pakistan Ayub Khan, then General Officer Commanding of Eastern Wing had similarly decided to attack fifteen thousand Bengali policemen in Dacca They had organised a peaceful demonstration to press their demand for equal pay Dubbing them as mutineers Ayub had ordered the commander of the Punjab Regiment to crush the unarmed Bengali policemen Without giving a warning the Punjabi soldiers attacked them with tanks and machine guns A number of policemen including their ring leaders were butchered On another occasion when thousands of angry students of the Dacca University had surrounded the Assembly Hall in Dacca to protest against the reactionary policies of the State Government Ayub Khan along with his men appeared on the scene and butchered these young men. To Ayub Khan it was a victory for the solidarity of Pakistan and Islam

A peep into the real situation as it obtained is revealing East Bengal was simmering with unrest because the State Administration was dominated by Punjabi officers who treated the Bengalis with contempt. To the Punjabi officers East Bengal was a colony Unashamedly they patronised their own people whom they granted industrial quotas and permission to occupy houses and shops left by Bengali Hindus Naturally this created unrest among Bengali Muslims They resorted to agitation. Ayub Khan and his ilk refused to appreciate their feelings Ayub Khan later summed up his views in the following lines

I could not quite understand whether the agitational pressure in East Pakistan was the result of a combination of little things such as personal complaints and grievances

or the manifestation of some deeper malady I often heard criticism of West Pakistani civil servants serving in East Pakistan They were accused of being exclusive and aggressive and their attitude was regarded as patronising An average East Pakistani in Dacca thought that the West Pakistanis were manifestation of some kind of colonialism [1]

Dismissing these allegations he stated *I saw many of these (West Pakistani officers) at work in the province and I thought they worked very hard and were deeply interested in the welfare of the province* In his opinion the Bengali leadership was devoid of *sober thinking and dedicated hard work* The alternative he adds was *to build up political pressure and shift all the blame to West Pakistan I could see that some of the political demagogues were going to exploit the sentiments of the people* [2]

In 1952 when all the Bengali political leaders were unanimously demanding *political parity between the two wings* of Pakistan Press in West Pakistan condemned this demand *as a danger to the existence of Pakistan* The *Evening Times*' of Karachi carried a series of editorials characterising political parity between the wings as a *principle conceived by persons who cannot see beyond their nose whose mental horizons spread no further than the thoughts of their jobs* The reason behind the demand for political parity explained the editor was *unmistakably the short stature and the small calibre of the Bengali leadership* [4] Another West Pakistani paper charged the Bengali leadership *with dancing to the tunes of enemies of Islam and Pakistan*.[5]

Bengali agitation for the defence of *Bengali language* was condemned as anti Islamic The first Prime Minister of Pakistan thundered Pakistan is a Muslim State and it must have as its *lingua franca* the language of the Muslim nation That language can be only Urdu and no other language"[6] The innuendo that Bengali was a non Muslim or anti Muslim language was exploited to the full by large sections of the ruling class who just happened to be non-

Bengali Bengali leaders were accused of dancing to the tunes of the communists [8]

During the elections campaign in 1954 the Central Government ent *mullah* agitators to East Pakistan Rumours were set afloat that the supporters of internal autonomy for East Bengal were financed by Hindus living abroad and these leaders were conspiring to hand over East Bengal to West Bengal [9]

Despite these accusations the United Front led by Mr Fazlul Huq secured a clear majority but as soon as he formed his government his opponents organised communal riots on a huge scale and accused the Chief Minister of having organised these riots with the help of his Communist followers Taking advantage of a false report published in the New York Times alleging that Fazlul Huq planned to proclaim an independent East Pakistan the Central Government declared him a traitor to Pakistan [10] He was even charged with having been in contact with India [11] In 1955 during debates in the Constituent Assembly some of the supporters of the superior units of Urdu charged the defenders of Bengali as opponents to the interest of national unity and Islam [1] In February 1956 when H S Suhrwardy refused to sign the new Constitution he was dubbed as traitor to Pakistan.[13] The six-point demand for regional autonomy by East Bengal Awami League was characterised as un Islamic [14] President Ayub Khan charged the Bengali leaders with acting against the interests of Pakistan and said They want to establish a *Greater Bengal* which means that East Bengal and West Bengal would combine to form an independent State This is bound to result in East Pakistan s Muslims being enslaved by caste Hindus of Bengal [15] The President threatened that if necessary the language of weapon would have to be used and the country might have to go through a civil war as the United States did [16] As Mr Khalid B Sayeed points out the tragedy was that Ayub Khan did not seem to have a sympathetic understanding of political aspirations of East Pakistan s political and urban elites who

were not allowed an effective voice and political role in the shaping and sharing of power in Pakistan [17]

In 1950 when H S Suhrawardy formed Awami League with the blessings of Fatima Jinnah Liaquat Ali the then Prime Minister of Pakistan denounced him as a traitor because the country did not need another political party and the ruling Muslim League was the only symbol of national unity [18] In September 1956 the 'traitor Suhrawardy was appointed Prime Minister of Pakistan After just over a year however in October 1957 he was forced to submit his resignation to the President He was arrested by Ayub Khan s regime in January 1962 A few days before his arrest a pro Government journal *Nai Roshni* of Karachi carried a news item in the January 19 issue which accused Suhrawardy of conspiring with America to topple down the Government of Ayub Khan [19]

During the elections for the National Assembly in 1970 the former Chief Minister of N W F P Abdul Qayyum Khan accused all his opponents including Sheikh Mujibur Rehman and Khan Wali Khan of conspiring with foreign powers against Pakistan He said

Big powers wanted to set up a Government in Pakistan that could extend a friendly hand to India They think that Sheikh Mujibur Rehman aided by Wali Khan from the Frontier Mr G M Syed from Sind and some other like-minded people from Baluchistan and Punjab would be able to capture the Government Foreign powers have distributed money in East and West Pakistan This money is being used to make Pakistan surrender to their interests [20]

It is significant to note that Abdul Qayyum is patronised by the Military rulers of Pakistan for let it be remembered he is the person who had arrested Dr Khan Sahib and several members of the N W F P Assembly in 1948 on fake charges of conspiring with India to destory Pakistan.

Sheikh Mujibur Rehman is a symbol of the Bengali s movement for restoration of democracy In

1966 he was arrested several times The Government was bent upon keeping him behind the bars with the result that as soon as he was released on bail the police arrested him again on some trumped-up charges The puppet governor of East Pakistan Monem Khan told his officers that so long as he was there Sheikh Mujib-ur-Rehman would have to be in jail [1] Thus after about 21 months of detention when he was released from jail on January 18 1968 a group of army men pounced upon him and dragged him to Dacca Cantonment He was kept in solitary confinement and was subjected to inhuman torture He was told that he would be prosecuted on the charge of conspiring with India to overthrow the Government of Pakistan [2] One of the other accused in this case was shot dead The Sheikh was however released unconditionally on February 22 1969 because the tottering regime of Ayub Khan wanted his support to save itself The dictator had to admit that the people of East Bengal were no equal partners in the administration and in different spheres of life [23] Ayub Khan convened a Round Table Conference in order to restore parliamentary set up However while the negotiations were still going on [the Dictator despatched army to the Eastern wing where people had resorted to open rebellion [25] On March 25 1969 when the newly appointed civilian Governors of East and West Pakistan were going to call opposition leaders for consultation Radio Pakistan announced that Pakistan s soldier-President Field Marshall Mohammad Ayub Khan had stepped down and handed over power to the Army Commander in Chief General Yahya Khan The 52 year old General immediately pro claimed martial law throughout the country [26] It is a strange coincidence that exactly two years after his stepping into power on March 25 1971 the new Military Dictator General Yahya Khan *played the ame trick He dragged his negotia*tions with Sheikh Mujibur Rehman and at the same time rushed Pakistani troops to East Bengal Then all of a sudden he broke down the negotiations and before leaving for Karachi ordered his troops to crush the democratic movement

in East Bengal The man whom a few days ago he had called the future Prime Minister of Pakistan[27] was now dubbed a traitor and the blood thirsty West Pakistani army swept across East Pakistan to massacre Bengali Muslims in order to what the Dictator called save the unity of the Islamic State of Pakistan

In 1969 the controlled Press in Pakistan was employed to raise the bogey of Indian armed intervention[8] in order to divert public attention from the peoples movement The report published by the West Pakistan Press spoke darkly of alleged Indian infiltration in East Bengal Guns were sold to the province the report said, adding that the President had made this reference at the Round Table Conference Sheikh Mujibur Rehman s remarks on these allegations were significant He said

> We have witnessed this game during the last 21 years Whenever the people of East Bengal started a movement to achieve their rights the vested interests in West Pakistan and their media have always discovered the existence of Indian agents in it. They discovered Indian money assistance and support in the language movement in the demand for regional autonomy and in the historic six point movement

The same drama was repeated in April 1971, when inspite of imposition of strict censorship people all over the world came to know of large scale criminal activities of the West Pakistani Army in East Bengal while Z A Bhutto charged Mujibur Rehman with the intention of establishing a fascist and racist regime in East Bengal the Pakistan Government discovered an Indian plot to undermine the national solidarity and territorial integrity of the State of Pakistan [30]

For the students of world history it is not a strange phenomenon Dictators and fascist rulers have their own familiar tactics Their language is quite different from the language of democracy Hitler showed the way for future dictators when he crushed his communist opponents on the false charge of setting fire to the building of the German

Parliament The world is familiar how Chinese rulers denounced their opponents as agents of Russian revisionism and American imperialism Pakistani rulers are undoubtedly following in their footsteps in order to maintain and strengthen their iron grip on the people of East Bengal

NOTES

1 Ayub Khan *Friends Not Masters* (Oxford London 1968) pp 26 27
2 Ibid page 96
3 Ibid pp 24 25
4 Quoted in Z A Suleri *Pakistan Lost Years* (Lahore Progressive Papers Ltd 1962) pp 48 49
5 Niwai Waqt Lahore June 1952
6 Tariq Ali *Pakistan Military Rule or Peoples Power* (London 1970) p 80
7 Keith Callard *Pakistan A Political Study* (New York s Macmillan 1957) p 183
8 Karl Von Vorys *Political Development in Pakistan* (Princeton 1965) p 80
9 Y B Gankovsky L R Gordon—*Polonskaya A History of Pakistan* (Moscow 1964) page 200
10 K Callard op cit p 49 Khalid B Sayeed *The Political System of Pakistan* (Houghton Mifflin Company Boston 1967) p 188
11 The Daily *Jang* Karachi December 23 1954
12 Keith Callard op cit page 181
13 Daily *Anjam* Karachi February 27 1956
14 The *Dawn* Karachi, February 1966
15 *The Pakistan Times* March 20 1966
16 Ibid March 21 1966
17 *The Political System of Pakistan* op cit page 211
18 Z.A Suleri *Pakistan Lost Years* p 25 Jamna Das Akhtar *Political Conspiracies in Pakistan* (Delhi 1969) pp 114 115
19 *Political Conspiracies in Pakistan* p 261
20 The *Dawn* Karachi November 2 1970
21 22 Mujibur Rehman s statement in the court published in the *Indian Express* February 8 1969
During open revolt in East Bengal in 1969 an angry mob attacked the residence of Governor Monem Khan His life was saved by his Hindu servant Monem Khan reached Karachi on March 19 1969 bare headed and bare footed
23 *Pakistan Times* February 9 1969· *Political Conspiracies in Pakistan* op cit page 317

24 *Political Conspiracies in Pakistan* op cit p 322
25 The *Statesman* March 23 1964
26 *The Amrit Bazar Patrika* Calcutta March 26 1969
27 *Pakistan Observer* Dacca January 14 1971
28 *Pakistan Times* March 11 1969
29 *The Daily Ittefaq* Dacca March 12 1969
30 Radio Pakistan News (released by Pakistan High Commission New Delhi) No 69 P 1
31 Pakistan s Ambassador Agha Shahi s letter to the Secretary General of UN U Thant published in the *National Herald* April 9 1971

Chapter II

The Roots of Autonomy

If Pakistan was disintegrating in division and violence it had in a sense only moved full circle in its quarter-century history For Pakistan emerged as a nation in 1947 out of division and strife Propelled by Mohammed Ali Jinnah s vision of a Moslem homeland in South Asia Pakistan was assembled from the predominantly Moslem areas of British India But the partitioning of India touched off a six-month blood bath between Hindus and Moslems in which an estimated half million people perished And it created a Pakistan with two distant wings separated by 1100 miles of Indian territory

This geographical handicap was serious enough But to further complicate matters their slaved devotion to Islam is virtually all that the two sectors of Pakistan have in common. West Pakistan is a land of deserts and mountains and generally arid climate the far off most densely populated eastern wing is a humid land of jungles and alluvial plains And differences in racial personality between the Punjabis of West Pakistan and the Bengalis of the East are extreme A proud, martial people the Punjabis look down upon the Bengalis and over the years have constantly exploited their countrymen in the east [1]

American observers realised the above mentioned facts in 1971 but in January 1958 a prominent member of the Pakistan Constituent Assembly Mr Mansur Ahmad gave the same warning to the West Pakistani leaders in his following statement

> Pakistan is a unique country having two wings which are separated by more than one thousand miles. These two wings differ in all matters except two things namely that they have a common religion barring a section of the people in East Pakistan and we have achieved our independence by a common struggle These are the only two points which are common to both the wings of Pakistan With the exception of these two things all other factors viz the language the tradition the culture the costume the dietary the calendar the standard time practically everything is different There is in fact nothing common between the two wings particularly in respect of those which are the *sin quo non* to form a nation [2]

The circumstances in which Pakistan came into being as two disparate wings tied together by a tenuous religious link also nurtured the roots of autonomy in the East The Lahore Resolution of the Muslim League which formed the basis of the demand for partitioning India in fact never mentioned the word Pakistan It simply called for Independent States in which the Constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign [3]

The resolution then clearly stated that the respective regions would control all powers such as defence external affairs communications customs and such other matters as may be necessary Thus the Lahore Resolution voted clearly for independent States This resolution was moved by the then Chief Minister of United Bengal Mr A K Fazlul Huq [4] During the final negotiations with the British Mr Jinnah publicly argued that the departure of the colonial power would terminate paramountcy (a synonym for national jurisdiction) and that sovereignty should therefore revert to all constituent units [5]

Muslim masses in Bengal had joined the Muslim League movement because they were economically backward and they expected that with the establisment of an independent predominently Muslim State they would be able to mould their destiny according to their own wishes They were already fighting against big landlords The Krishak Proja Party led by A K Fazlul Haq was no doubt a Muslim Party but it was fighting for economic revolution. When however the party was forced to join the Muslim League Muslim Jotedar landlords industrialists and big businessmen rose to prominence in its leadership They turned this movement into an anti Hindu Zamindar and big businessmen movement Hired *mullahs* delivered inflamatory speeches which gave the impression that Hindu capitalists and big landlords alone were responsible for the economic backwardness of the Muslim masses Election propaganda of the Muslim League in 1945 and the bill restricting the Zamindari system drawn up by the provincial League ministry created the illusion that the establisment of Pakistan would automatically solve the problem[6] In fact the Muslim big landlords and industrialists wanted to use this situation to further their own interests Groups of these classes represented by Khwaja Nazimuddin M M Isphani and Moammad Ali Bogra played significant role in fomenting communalism in Bengal Hussain Shahid Suhrawardy who became Chief Minister of Bengal after the 1945 elections also used every possible excu e to fan religious fanaticism and to organise anti Hindu riots

On the eve of partition H S Suhrawardy probably realised his mistake He now knew that Muslims of East Bengal would never be allowed to establish an independent State He and Maulana Bhashani met the dissident Congress leader Sarat Chandra Bose and tried to evolve a formula to maintain the unity of their province by establishing a sovereign independent State of Bengal[7]

On July 30 1947 Suhrawardy met the Viceroy and made a last minute effort to pursuade him to accept this formula[8] Though the British Governor of Bengal Sir Fredrick Burrow,

supported Suhrawardy the Viceroy brushed him off[9] The Congress had already rejected the idea Jinnah hated Suhrawardy on this account with the result that his opponent Khwaja Nazimuddin was appointed the first Chief Minister of East Bengal

Those were the days of hectic activity devoted exclusively to the attainment of a Muslims homeland under the leadership of one Qaid-e-Azam In the words of a political observer the concept of two Muslim States for one Muslim nation went under the debris of day to day agitation Over-powered by the emotional speeches of Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Bengali Muslims forgot the real meaning of the Lahore Resolution Suhrawardy failed to organise them to launch an agitation for achieving this goal He kept quiet and joined Mahatma Gandhi to restore communal peace in West Bengal

Mohammad Ali Jinnah made a historic announcement on August 14 1947 Speaking in the first session of the Pakistan Constituent Assembly on that day he declared

Everyone of you no matter to what community you belong no matter what your colour, caste or creed is first second and last a citizen of this State with equal rights privileges and obligations In course of time Hindus will cease to be Hindus and Muslims will cease to be Muslims not in the religious sense because that is a personal faith of each individual but in the political sense as citizens of the State [10]

This was an ideal set forth as a goal before the newly born nation Nobody then could quarrel with Jinnah on the question of this ideal I feel that Jinnah sincerely believed in parliamentary democracy He told Shri Prakasa the first Indian High Commissioner to Pakistan that he did not intend Pakistan to be an Islamic State[11] I do not want to enter into controversy on why Jinnah failed to assert himself Some observers believe that it was a result of the British intrigues that Jinnah was influenced by Khaliq uz Zaman who became his chief adviser even during the Prime Ministership of Liaquat Ali Khan[12] Almost all the key posts in the

administration were still held by the British officers and their stooge Khaliq uz-Zaman was nominated President of the Pakistan Muslim League. Aided and abetted by the British officers this clique manoeuvred in such a way that the Government of Pakistan became a handmaid of British diplomacy determined to make the best of the religious sentiments of the Muslims Pakistan's invasion of Kashmir was actually organised by the British officers of the Pakistan Government. These officers in their heart of hearts had no good opinion of Jinnah. They knew that the 'Father of the Nation, had no administrative experience and as a result they knew how to flatter him in order to force him to act in accordance with their advice According to the official biographer of Jinnah Hector Bolitho the first British Commander in Chief of Pakistan Army told him (biographer)

> Jinnah was not really interested in the army He had no ideas on the subject and said to me I have no military experience I leave that entirely to you and Liaquat.'[13]

The debacle in Kashmir made Jinnah feel frustrated Between August 1947 and February 1948 at least four attempts to murder him were made by the Punjabi extremists[14] it made him nervous. Liaquat Ali and Khaliq uz-Zaman knew that his days were numbered. They were trying to build up their own factions both unmistakably under the influence of foreign elements While the former declared that Pakistan would become an Islamic State Khaliq-uz-Zaman revived the campaign for Pan Islamism.[15] Against this background it seems idle to sepeculate whether Jinnah really believed in equal rights of all the people living in Pakistan. However as far as the Muslims were concerned there was no room for doubt There were the Muslims of Punjab Sind Baluchistan and the N W F P in the Western Wing and there were the Bengali Muslims who were all to be organised into a single nation based on the fundamental principle of the unity of Islam

The eminent Pakistani historian Dr Ishtiaq Hussain Qureshi who, though being a non Bengali represented East

one notices that there are deep conflicts between one *pir* and another and between one sect and another [22] According to the Munir report no two *ulemas* could agree on the definition of a Muslim When faced with a real or imaginary threat from India Pakistanis have found in Islam an admirable symbol or rallying cry for national solidarity but they have not been very successful in using Islam to build a national consensus on more mundane issues like equitable allocation of economic resources between various parts of the country [23] Cry of 'Islam in danger' has been a pet slogan for different leaders to safeguard their own interests Most of *ulemas* and *pirs* are conservative by nature and are easily exploited by the ruling classes which include among others big landlords industrialists and professional politicians These *ulemas* and *pirs* supported Jinnah although the latter did not know precisely how to say prayers To them Jinnah was an embodiment of Islam whereas devout Muslim leaders like Maulana Azad Maulana Ahmad Saeed Madani and Maulana Hifzur Rehman were enemies of Islam [24]

The ruling classes of West Pakistan especially the Punjabi leaders ignore perhaps wilfully that Islam has never been the unifying force in the long history of the expansion of Islam Three early Caliphs were murdered by their opponents who were themselves Muslims [25] The last Caliph of the Umayyad House was butchered by the armies of Abu Al-Abbas [26] The latter was supported by the overwhelming majority of Persian Muslims who had risen in revolt against the Umayyads Even the tombs of these Caliphs with the exception of those of Mu awiyah and Umar II were desecrated [?] The new rulers dug up their graves and amused themselves by whipping the poor remnants of their bodies and then throwing them to the flames [8] While the armies of Yazid I killed Hussain grandson of the Prophet Caliph Ja afar Almatwakil ordered his men to destroy the sacred tomb of Hassan the second grandson of the Prophet and prohibited the pilgrimage of Karbala [29] The sacred

mosque built in the memory of Hussain was also destroyed Caliph Abu-Mansur massacred the followers of Ali His armies attacked Madina and killed thousands of Shia Muslims including Mohammad the great grandson of Hasan[30] The followers of Qarmatian Caliph attacked the holy city of Mecca slaughtered more than 30 000 devotees removed the *kiswa* (cloth covering the Kaaba) and smashed the Black Stone removing the pieces to their capital at Al-Ahsa[1] in the Bahrin region of the Persian Gulf A number of Caliphs of the House of Abbasia were dethroned killed starved to death or blinded by their Muslim rival At one time three former Caliphs all blind were wandering like beggars through the streets of Baghdad[2] It is necessary to recall that the so called *ulemas* always praised the conquerors and never expressed any sympathy for the murdered or the deposed whom they used to declare defenders of the Faith during their reign. In India the concept of Islamic unity did not prevent Nadir Shah and Ahmad Shah from attacking and ransacking the Mughal Empire A Muslim Rohilla captured the Mughal Emperor Shah Alam and blinded him During the first World War Arabs rose against the Turkish Caliphate and established their own states on the ruins of the Turkish Muslim Empire When the Sudanese Muslims revolted against Egypt the latter had to grant independence to Sudan. The late President Nasser of Egypt brought unity between Egypt and Syria cy establishing a United Arab Republic but when the Syrians revolted he allowed Syria to regain its independent sovereign statu Like Islam other religions too including Christianity and Hinduism have failed to unite their followers In the context of the pre ent state of affairs religion cannot become the sole or even the main basis for unity because in addition to geographical considerations socio economic issues problems of bread and butter for millions of men and women and language and culture play an important role in the formation of a compact nation Unfortunately the West Pakistani rulers failed to understand or appreciate these realities

It was through sheer luck that the West Pakistani Muslims who did not play any significant role in the struggle for the establishment of Pakistan emerged as the rulers of the new born State At the time of the Partition the Punjab was being ruled by a British Governor Khizar Hayat's Ministry having resigned the Muslim League found itself in a minority party in the State Assembly of the United Punjab The N W F P was being governed by a Congress Ministry headed by Dr Khan Sahib Baluchistan was under the direct administration of the Political Department The Congress was in a position to form Ministry in Sind but the British Governor Sir Francis Mudie refused to handover the Province to the mercy of the Congress [33] He nominated the feudal landlord Ayub Khuro as the Chief Minister of Sind In N W F P Khan Sahib's ministry was dismissed by Mr Jinnah The new Chief Minister Abdul Qayyum interned Khan Sahib and his colleagues on the flimsy charge of conspiring against Pakistan In the Punjab Nawab Mamdot a big landlord was installed as the Chief Minister It was only in Bengal that the Muslim League formed the majority party in the Assembly Since however Mr Jinnah did not trust Chief Minister Suhrawardy he nominated Khwaja Sir Nazim ud din as the Chief Minister of East Bengal The Khwaja though a gentleman by nature was an arch reactionary and a big landlord His old associations with the British were known to every one As the new born state of Pakistan faced economic difficulties and the have not politicians were getting strong the rulers of Pakistan played upon the religious sentiments of the Muslims

The situation arising out of the wide spread communal riots on both sides of the borders and the fighting in Kashmir helped them in these tactics in West Pakistan While the communal situation in Bengal soon became normal as a result of the efforts of Mahtama Gandhi and H S Suhrawardy the new rulers of East Bengal tried to carry on the administration without realising the basic economic issues The dissident leaders were hesitant to organise the masses due to the

overwhelming influence of the towering personalities of Jinnah and Liaquat Ali

For the masses Jinnah s word was law However with the passing of days the hard realities of life began to influence and mould the political situation of the Eastern Wing in a natural way Soon the Bengali Muslims found their administration dominated by the Punjabi Muslim officers They behaved like foreign rulers They hated the language and culture of the Bengali Muslims Instead of setting their energy to the well being of the Bengalis they started bringing Punjabi businessmen from Lahore Layalpur Jhang and Multan and allowed them to occupy the premises left by the Bengali Hindus These new settlers were encouraged to exploit East Bengal economically They were given quotas and permits to expand their activities In addition to these immigrants thousands of Bihari Muslims came to settle in East Bengal They were also accorded preferential treatment The Punjabi officers instigated the new settlers to organise communal riots in order to push as many Bengali Hindus to India as possible and to occupy their houses lands and business premises Naturally these elements became the backbone to the Punjabi officers who dominated the administration Bengali Muslims who had struggled for the establishment of Pakistan gained nothing out of this change Bengali peasants and workers who for years together fought against entrenched vested interests found themselves helpless with their government Big landlords and industrialists whether they were Bengalis or non Bengalis refused to listen to their grievances The new industrialists from West Pakistan who had succeeded in usurping the industries left over by the Hindu Marwaris ignored the unemployed Bengali Muslims and instead recruited Punjabis and Biharis Punjabi officers in the Police Department brought a large number of policemen from Punjab thus closing this channel of employment to the unemployed Bengali youth The Army Selection Board closed its doors on them on the plea of lack of man power with qualities of leadership [34] When discontentment among the Bengali Muslims

grew and people started criticising the West Pakistani rulers, they were warned that they were doing a very great disservice to the unity of the country[35] In his book *Friends not Masters* Ayub Khan states that he saw how 'some of the political demogogues were going to exploit the emotions of the people[36] He admits that the mannerism of the West Pakistanis irritated the East Pakistan He often heard criticism of the conduct of West Pakistani civil servants serving in East Pakistan However he dismisses all these allegations and states that they were deeply interested in the welfare of the province[37]

The State Government headed by Khwaja Nazimuddin was at the mercy of the Central leadership The Khwaja was a weak person How could he lodge complaints with the Central leadership against the colonial behaviour of the Punjabi officers ? The result was that the situation became explosive Trouble was already brewing and the storm finally broke in Dacca on July 13 1948 Revolting policemen surrounded Government House and the Chief Minister s residence They had removed arms and ammunition from a magazine in the police lines and taken defensive positions Instead of listening to their grievances the Chief Minister rang up Ayub Khan The Punjabi and Pathan troops were soon called out to crush what was called a mutiny A number of Bengali policemen including their ring leaders were killed Many more were taken into custody

On another occasion in the same year Ayub Khan s boys were again called by Khwaja Nazimuddin when he had a precarious majority of four in the Assembly He was worried that he would soon lose further support as Fazlul Huq had mobilised the students who surrounded the Assembly Hall Ayub Khan and Major Pirzada smuggled the Chief Minister out through the kitchen Mohammad Ali Bogra[38] who controlled the four decisive votes on which the destiny of the Ministry hanged had in fact already joined hands with Fazlul Huq Ayub Khan threatened to kill Bogra and

when Bogra resented rudeness Ayub Khan told him firmly to go home It was in this way that the bayonets of the Punjabi and Pathan soldiers of Ayub Khan saved the unpopular ministry of Khwaja Nazimuddin At the instance of Ayub Khan an *Ansar* force (civil armed guards) was built up because he felt that such a force would bring discipline to the masses [39] The real reason why this force was created was to crush popular movements in the future With a similar motive in view the East Pakistan Rifles was organised during Ayub Khan s stay in East Bengal The Army leader who later established his own military dictatorship in 1958 probably sensed the danger of the emergence of a popular movement for full fledged autonomy in East Bengal even in 1948 It is unfortunate that instead of solving the problems of the Bengali Muslims the rulers of West Pakistan continued raising the slogans of Islam in danger Pakistan in danger and so on They thought that the roots of autonomy could be cut by destroying the Bengali culture and Bengali language and by the complete dominance of West Pakistan over East Bengal During the last twenty-three years different tactics were employed to achieve this object The rulers went to the extent of fomenting communal riots to push out Hindus from East Bengal in order to turn the majority of Bengalis into a minority in the overall population pattern of Pakistan However it is now obvious that they failed in this nefarious game Bengalis may or may not win the present battle but the roots of autonomy have become stronger and gone deeper Sooner or later truth shall triumph

NOTES

1 *Pakistan Plung s into Civil War* in the *Newsweek* New York April 5 1971 p 10
2 *The Pakistan Observer* Dacca January 23 1956
3 Leonard Binder *Religion and Politics in Pakistan* (Berkely and Los Angels University of California Press 19o1) p 62 *A History of Pakistan* op cit page 73
4 In fact Mr Jinnah wanted that Sir Sikander Hayat Chief Minister

not hold then Pakistan stands alone and sooner or later will be swallowed by Russia or India or more probably partitioned as Poland was partitioned by Russia and Germany in the Second World War

Russia is at present concentrating on India as this is the more fertile ground I cannot believe that we wish to see Pakistan run by poli e officials and Russian commissars

I am sure that you will not mind this letter from an old friend You and I have worked too long together not to be frank with one other

I can assure you that the feeling in Britain is strongly pro-Pakistan I know this from the letters I receive from Home (Political Conspiracies in Pakistan op cit p 77)

13 *Jinnah—Creater of Pakistan* op cit page 100
14 S M Sharma *Peeps into Pakistan* (Patna) p 14
15 *Ibid* page 193
16 D Prasad *Bangla Desh Versus Pakistan* (*Mainstream* April 10 1971) page 160
17 Khalid B Sayeed *The Political System of Pakistan* op cit p 160
18 *Ibid*
19 Liaquat Ali s peech in the Constituent Assembly in March 1949 (cf *Constituent Assembly of Pakistan Debates* Vol I (March 7 1949) p 4
20 *The Munir Report* p 18
21 *The Political System of Pakistan* op cit page 180
22 *The Munir Report* p 218
23 *The Political System of Pakistan* op cit page 183
24 Th need for the service of *pirs* in the elections was so great that even some of the highly westernised landlowners who were often seen in the Lahore Gymkhana Club or the Lahore Race track pre ented them as Venerable *Pirs* to the masse (*The Munir Report* p 255)
25 Phillip K Hitti *The Arabs A Short History* (Macmillan London 1948 pp 53-80)
26 Carl Brockelmann *History of Islamic People* (Routledge and Kegan Raul London 1952) pp 105 106
27 Robert Payne *The Holy Sword* (Robert Hale Ltd London 1961) p 137
28 Ibid page 164
29 *History of the Islamic People* op cit p 133
30 *The Holy Sword* op cit p 164, *History of the Islamic People* op cit page 144

31 *Ibid* pp 106 107
32 *Ibid* p 150
33 Khaliq uz Zaman *Pathway to Pakistan* p 373
34 Ayub Khan "Friends Not Masters" p 28
35 *Ibid*
36 *Ibid* page 25 At that time Ayub Khan's stay in East Bengal was in his capacity as the General Officer Commanding of the Eastern Command
37 *Ibid* page 26
38 He was the same gentleman who was nominated Prime Minister of Pakistan after the dismissal of Khawaja Nazimuddin in 1954 Subsequently Bogra was also dismissed from this post
39 *Friends Not Masters* page 30

Chapter III

A Peep Into the Background

When one looks at East Bengal one is struck by the more than one thousand miles of distance that separates it from West Pakistan An ordinary vessal that starts from Karachi reaches East Bengal after ten or eleven days In addition to this geographical distance between the two wings of Pakistan it cannot be refuted that the Bengalis whether they are Muslims or Hindus belong to a distinct cultural group Theirs in fact is the only culturally cohesive group in Pakistan Punjabis and Sindhis may also be regarded as linguistically and culturally identifiable groups but they are not as culturally well-knit as the Bengalis Bengalis are deeply conscious of belonging to a distinct cultural group They regard their language as one of the most beautiful and constantly speak of the heights of literary excellence it has reached [1] An East Bengali Muslim writer describes his people thus

> They are not Aryans nor Arabs. Their body and their mind have been formed by the soft soil of East Bengal by its wide blue sky its murmuring rivers its warm benevolent sun, its pleasant breeze and its splended seasons. Nature has given their mind and body a distinctive stamp [2]

Satya Pir a cult with which Hussain Shah's name is associated.[9] There are several other forms of worship that have been in vogue in Bengal both among the Hindus and the Muslims. For instance *Manik Pir* and *Kalu Ghazi* are worshipped by both the communities. *Olai Chandi* is worshipped in order to avoid epidemics. *Tinlakh Pir* is no other than the Trailakshnath of the Hindus. The followers of the *Neda Dir* of North Bengal identify the Holy Prophet with Mahadeva and Fatima with Mahamaya.

Magan Thakur was distinctly the name of a Muslim Chief Minister of the king of Arakan. The famous Muslim Minister Baduruddin was honoured with the title of Pandit for his wonderful capacity to sing ballads based on the *Ramayana*. For treating minor ailments of their children Hindu women still stand at the doors of mosques holding little water pots above their heads so that devout Muslims may utter Koranic benedictums as they came out after prayers. While Hussain Shah restored many Hindu temples in Nawadwip, Maharaja Govinda Manikya (1658 A.D.) of Tripura repaired and renovated the Shah Shujah Mosque in the town of Comilla. Similarly Mirza Hussain Ali, a native of Tipperah district, not only composed songs in praise of the goddess Kali but built a temple of Kali in Narayanpur. According to a Muslim folk song Bhagirath, a Hindu Chief of Ayodhya settled down in Bengal. Sultan Ghiasuddin appointed him as his Minister. One of his descendents became a Muslim and married the daughter of the then Sultan. His son was the famous Isha Khan who displayed exemplary courage in vindicating the independence of Bengal against the aggression of the Moghul armies.

Nasir Shah who ruled Bengal for forty years till 1325 translated the *Mahabharat* into Bengali. Hussain Shah appointed the reputed poet Maladhar Bose to translate *Bhagvat Purana* into Bengali in 1480. Hussain Shah's Governor Paragal Khan appointed Kavindra Parameswara to translate the *Mahabharat*. Paragal Khan's son Chutti Khan was Governor of Chittagong. He apppointed the poet Sri

Karan Naddi to translate the *Ashwamedha Parva* of the *Mahabharat* into Bengali

Shamsher Ghazi the Muslim hero of the ballads called Shamsher Khizer Khan is said to have occupied Tipperah with the blessings of goddess Kali

Old Bengali literature is full of instances of Hindu Muslim fellowship in the domain of culture In a work called *Imam Yatrar Punthi* the Muslim author addresses a hymn to Saraswati the goddess of learning Aftabuddin the poet of *Jamil Dilran* sends his hero to the nether world to seek a boon from the *Saptarishis* the seven sages of the Hindu mythology Hamidullah in his *Behula Sunderi* gives a description of Brahmins consulting the Holy Koran to find an auspicious day Daraf Khan s *Ganga Stotra* is still chanted by the pious Hindus in Bengal A Bengali translation of Mir Muhammad s Jaisi s Hindi original *Padmavat* gives a very deep insight into the social life of the Hindus of the time. Inspite of its Sanskritic Bengali it is even today recited before large Muslim gatherings in the district of Chittagong The renowned Afghan General and Arabic scholar Bijuli Khan was a devout follower of Chaitanya

During the Bhakti movement Bengal produced a number of Hindu and Muslim poets who were imbued with the idea of fundamental unity between Vaishnavism and Islam In his book *Jnansagar* Aliraja speaks of Muhammed and Chaitanya as the inspired devotees of the same god Saiyad Mohammed Akbar (1637 A D) says that the Farishta of the *Koran* is Narada of the Puranas Allah is Ishwar Paygambar (Prophet) is Avtar Adam is Shiva Eve is Kali, *Khawaja* Khizar is Vasudeva Muslim saints are Munis and *Pir* is *Guru*.

Bengali language was influenced by Persian from which it borrowed nineteen forms of metre and the *Ghazal*. During the Muslim period, Arabic and Persian loan-words chiefly in the vocabulary of administration luxury and good living made a deep impact on the Bengali language, displacing the old vocabulary of Sanskritic origin.[11] On the popular level one comes across Muslim influences in Bengali folk-tales such

as introduction of fairies in the story of *Madhumala*[12] Muslim Bengali poets sometimes wrote on Hindu themes Alaol wrote poems on the familiar love theme of Radha and Krishna and showed considerable first hand familiarity with Hindu religious ceremonie rituals and customs with Sanskrit classification of feminine emotions and with Sanskrit prosody[13]

Hindus and Muslims fought shoulder to shoulder against the British invaders History records the bravery of Mohan Lall a young man well versed in the art of peace and war who fought for Sirajuddaula in the battle of Plassey A Hindu friend gave protection to Nawab Aliwardy Khan who was extremely distressed due to the Maharatta raids It is said that the Nawab followed his Hindu friend but the way they took was a wrong one and when the Hindu friend realised his mistake he was so repentant that he killed himself with his own sword Aliwardy Sirajuddaula and members of their families used to celebrate the Holi festival

The architecture of Bengal during the Muslim period was a remarkable evidence of the joint efforts of the Indian and Persian craftsmen Most of the craftsmen who built mosques and temples at Gauda Mala and Pandua were Hindus who adopted their own technique to the needs of their Muslim masters The outer arch of the beautiful mosque of Adinah looks like the trefoil arched canopy of the image of Vishnu found in the Manbhum disrict but the inscriptions and arabesque ornament in it are undoubtedly a contribution of Saracenic art These Muslim buildings considerably influenced the construction of many Hindu temples of later times of which a notable example is the temple at Kanta Nagar in the Dinajpur district which was built in the eighteenth century after the style of the mosques in Gauda and Malda[14]

NOTES

1 Khalid B Sayeed *The Political System of Pakistan* page 185· A People Apart The complex Bengalis in *Newsweek* New York April 5 1971, page 10
2. Shamsuddin Abdul Kalam *Social Questions in Bengali Fiction* in S Sajjad Hussain ed Dacca University Seminar on Contemporary writing in East Pakistan (Dacca 1958) p 60
3 According to the 1961 census Hindus constituted 18 4 per cent of the population in East Bengal while they comprised only 1 5 percent of the population in W Pakistan
4 Even in West Pakistan, Urdu is the mother tongue of a minority of the population
5 Sisirkumar Gupta *Cultural Fellowship of Bengal* (Culture Publishers Calcutta 1943) page 43
6 *Ibid* pp 43-44
7 *Ibid* page 46 The Dargah of Pir Jalal Shah was bombed by the Pak Air Force during the second week of April 1971
8 *Cultural Fellowship of Bengal* op cit page 47
9 *Ibid* page 48
10 Salim ullah Fatimi Contribution in *Pakistan Ki Ilaqa-i Zabano per Farsi Ka Asar* Karachi 1953 p 18
11 D C Sen *History of Bengali Language and Literature* (Calcutta 1911) pp 81 82 Aziz Ahmad *Studies in Islamic Culture in the Indian Environment* (Oxford 1966) p 223
12 Aziz Ahmad op cit page 223
13 D C Sen op cit page 625

Chapter IV

Rise of Political Consciousness The British The League and Bengal

The battles of Plassey and Buxar in 1757 and 1764 brought the Muslim rule to an end in Bengal The Nawab and his nobles from Murshidabad were brought down on their knees and the Bengali Muslims felt demoralised and despondent at the fate of their nobles [1] The East India Company extorted the Diwani grants of Bengal Bihar and Orissa from the puppet Mughal Emperor Shah Alam Although the new subservient Nawab was still kept at Murshidabad the real power went into the hands of the British officers They appointed their own agents to collect revenue with the result that a large number of Bengali Muslims were deprived of their ource of income and social position By the Regulating Act of 1773 the Nawab was deprived of his *foujdari* and *Nizimat* functions and the British officers were appointed as *executive officers and judges This deprived the Muslim* middle class of their place in the police the army and the judiciary The Permanent Settlement of Bengal which was enforced in 1793 hit hard the Muslim landed aristocracy Free grants of land were resumed by the East India Company to augument its source of income In 1836 British planters

were allowed to own big plantations of indigo The peasants were deprived of their lands and forced to work as slaves in British plantations

In order to capture the textile industry the Company s government induced the Nawabs to force the weavers—largely Muslims—to supply goods at prices below market rate by 15 to 40 percent [2] Subsequently these weavers were forbidden to buy raw cotton from local peasants Instead they were forced to buy Surat cotton which they imported by sea at exorbitant prices [3] The British Government banned the import of Indian textiles in the U K and the East India Company handed over the monopoly of cotton trade to British traders Indian weavers were forced under torture to disclose to Manchester their secrets in bleaching and other processes [4] Instances are known of the thumbs of the experts being chopped off to prevent them from winding silk [5] Manufacturers in Manchester were provided with cheap raw cotton and silk enabling them to export their manufactured goods to India on competitive rates This destroyed the Indian textile industry in Bengal which was mainly in the hands of the Muslims Sir Charles Trevelyan thus ob erved in 1834

> Bengal piece goods have been displaced in the foreign market to the extent of above a crore of rupees a year and in the home market to the extent of about 80 lacs What is to become of all the people who were employed in working up this great amount ? [6]

Similarly Bengali workers were deprived of their trade in salt with the result that thousands of Muslims lost their source of income In the autumn of 1859 thousands of cultivators of the extensive plantations of Lower Bengal defied their British masters and refused to sow indigo [7] In that mutiny which is called the Indigo Revolt Muslims and Hindus fought shoulder to shoulder They were mercilessly crushed However the Indigo Revolt has deservedly passed into Bengali literature and history and is an abiding source of inspiration as the first instance of passive resistance in Bangla Desh The Titu Mir Revolt, a mixed

religo agrarian challenge was an armed fight in so far as a di armed people could put up such a fight and it may be good to remind oneself that the Awami League and the E P Rifles had their forerunners in those men who fought unyieldingly[8] In the first war of Independence in 1857 Hindus and Muslims serving in the Bengal Army demonstrated the ame spirit

In order to eliminate the danger of such rebellions in future as also to strengthen the foundations of its empire the the British government decided to generate antagonism among various religious and regional communities in the country The Peel Commission appointed in 1859 told the British Government that its Bengal army s weakness lay in the absence of racial prejudice of communal exclu iveness There was no ep rating by clan or cla s into companies In the lines Hindus and Muslims Sikhs and Poorabias were mixed up so that each and all lost to some extent their racial prejudice and became inspired with a common sentiment[9]

Sir John Lawrence and Sir Charles Wood supported this view The latter advi ed the Viceroy Lord Elgin to break the communal unity because as he put it how could the the British maintain them elves in India in the presence of this unity Lord Lawrence supported the proposal In a

Bengal With the establishment of the Indian National Congress a strong nationalist movement was again gaining momentum in Bengal The British Government then hit upon the strategem of partitioning of Bengal It expected East Bengal the new province with a compact Muslim majority to develop into a centre of the so-called Muslim nationalism inimical to the Congress and loyal to the British[1] The Viceroy Lord Curzon conducted a tour and told the Muslims that his government had taken this decision to protect the Muslim culture The *Sta esman* of Calcutta (then owned by the British) while supporting this announcement wrote

> The partition of Bengal is calculated to fasten in Eastern Bengal the growth of Muslim power which it is hoped will have the effect of checking the rapidly growing strength of the Hindu community [13]

This announcement enraged the Bengalis particularly the educated classes among the Hindus But Lord Curzon was bent upon perpetrating the mischief It is said that Nawab Salimullah of Dacca was also opposed to this plan initially but was won over when a loan of 100 000 pounds on a low rate of interest was advanced soon after the partition [14] The Government partitioned the province on October 16 1905 Nawab Salimullah and other Muslim aristocrats hailed this step as they thought by supporting this decision they would receive rich benefits Actually the move was in no case motivated by the sole desire to benefit Bengali Muslims This is evident from the letter dated April 6 1904 addressed by the then officiating Chief Secretary to Bengal Government to the Government of India It states that the divided Bengal would pull in different ways and thus fulfil the main objective of the scheme which was to split and thereby *weaken a solid body (Indian National Congress)* opposed to the British rule [15]

The opponents of partition started a widespread Swadeshi campaign They gave a call for the liberation of the motherland As the climate built up people started burning the British goods The movement grew into a veritable menace

to British interests Considering discretion as better part of valour the British Government undid the partition. In the meantime however they succeeded in sowing the seed of another mischief they induced the Nawab of Dacca to lay the foundation of the Muslim League The British Principal of Aligarh College Archibald prevailed upon Khan Sahib Haji Mohammad Ismail and Nawab Mohsinul Mulk to organise a deputation of loyal Muslims to meet the Viceroy Lord Minto Accordingly Sir Agha Khan led the deputation consisting of 70 local Muslims which met the Viceroy on October 1 1906 The British Press gave wide publicity to this deputation Lady Minto describes this meeting as a historic event She recorded in her diary the following lines

> This has been a very eventful day as some one said to me an epoch in the Indian history We are aware of the feeling of unrest that exists throughout India and dissatisfaction among the people of all classes and creeds. The younger generations (of Muslims) were wavering inclined to throw their lot with advanced agitations of the Congress and a howl went up that the loyal Muslims were not to be supported and that the agitatators were to obtain their demands through agitation This evening I received the following letter from an official I must send Your Excellency a line to say that a very big thing has happened today a work of statesmanship that will affect India and Indian history for many a long year It is nothing less than the pulling back of 62 millions of people from joining the ranks of the seditious opposition [16]

For the British imperialism it was really a very eventful day though it was a black day for India because the British Government actually laid the foundation of partition of India on communal lines on this day by introducing separate electorates

Sir Agha Khan who was later made His Highness without having a State was elected President of the Muslim

League One of the aims of the Muslim League was to project among the Muslims feelings of loyalty to the British Government and to remove any misconception that may arise as to the intention of the Government with regard to any of its members In a letter to the Dacca branch of the Muslim League the Agha Khan stressed that the 'League recognises British rule essential for India and it was upto the Muslims to apply all their energy to furthering British prestige and instilling respect and affection for the British in the public mind[17]

The Muslim League condemned the Swaraj and Swadeshi movements It was controlled by big landlords title holders and loyal princes like Raja Mansahab Ali the Nizam of Hyderabad Sir Mohammad Shafi and so on Although these leaders failed in their efforts to wean away the middle strata of Muslims from the rising revolutionary tide and the British Government was compelled to revoke the partition of Bengal regrouping of Bengal and Assam was done in such a way that Bengal was given a Muslim majority The Viceroy Lord Hardinge promised a University at Dacca for the special development of Muslim culture

It is significant that Nawab Salimullah and Nawab Ali Choudhuri of Bengal refused to join the Aligarh delegation that met the Victory They took this step to express their protest against the Aligarh leaders for not including the question of partition of Bengal in the memorandum that was to be presented to the Viceroy

Mr Fazlul Haq who was then a young rising advocate of the Calcutta High Court helped Nawab Salimullah to organise the first session of the Muslim League held in Dacca on December 30 1906 The partition of Bengal was annulled in 1911 In disgust Nawab Salimullah made Fazlul Huq who had in the meantime joined the Provincial Civil Service to resign and take to politics[18] Lord Minto speaking in the House of Lords criticised this decision as betrayal to the loyal Muslims of Bengal[19] However while the British Government changed Bengal into a Muslim majority pro-

since loyal Muslims like the Nawab of Dacca and Sir Agha Khan urged their followers not to agitate against this decision[20] Their followers especially the poor people in the eastern districts it may be reiterated did not gain from this decision However in order to placate and strengthen the hands of the aristocratic Muslim sections of Bengal the British Government gave special concessions to Muslims in educational matters and instructions were issued that qualified Muslims should be offered public appointments in disregard of better qualified Hindus[21] The communal poison in public services was thus injected in Bengal from very early days[22]

The Nawab of Dacca and his colleagues failed to rally Bengali Muslims around them despite these concessions from the British rulers. Fazlul Huq and other radical leaders were bitterly disgusted over the policies of the British rulers and their henchmen In April 1914 Fazlul Huq severely criticised the Nawab and the British rulers He talked of the parting of ways[23] which meant threat to launch agitation for independence The British rulers started doubting the loyalty of even the Bengali aristocracy They further knew that these feudal leaders had failed to win the Muslim masses to their side So the rulers turned their attention to Aligarh and started strengthening the hands of communal but loyal leaders from the United Provinces While the Muslim majority in Bengal could become a danger to the future of the British Raj Muslims in the United Provinces being in a minority could be exploited through their loyal leaders to inject the communal virus in the political life of India

In course of time the Muslim League came under the influence of radical leaders like Jinnah Abul Kalam Azad and Fazlul Huq While it still professed promotion of loyalty to the British Crown and protection of Muslims rights it set fourth for the first time the goal of the attainment of self government for India[24] The Agha Khan opposed this resolution because of his loyalty to the British and

resigned his permanent Presidentship of the League. Jinnah replaced him and said that loyalty to the Muslim League and the Muslim interests would in no way imply even the shadow of disloyalty to the larger national cause to which his life was dedicated

The outbreak of the First World War in which the British fought against the Caliph of Turkey aroused Muslim sentiments against the British Raj This brought the Muslim League closer to the Congress Fazlul Huq and his colleagues not obsessed with a minority complex came under the influence of the eminent Congress leader C R Das When, in 1916 Fazlul Huq presided over the Muslim League session; he was also the General Secretary of the Congress He joined the Home Rule Movement started by Annie Besant and Gandhiji With a view to attempting a new strategy of seeking Hindu Muslim unity to confront the British rule the two parties agreed to sign the historic Lucknow Pact The principle of weightage for the minority communities in the provinces was agreed upon As a result of this understanding while the Muslim minorities in U P and other provinces were to be given over representation Bengali Muslims with 52 6 per cent of the population were given 40 per cent of the total seats while the Punjabi Muslims with 54.8 per cent of the population were to be given 50 per cent of seats

The Lucknow Pact was soon repudiated by a section of the Muslim Leaguers They met the Governor-General Lord Chelmsford and organised protest meetings under the leadership of Dr A M Suhrawardy This created a crisis in Bengal Fazlul Huq had to yield ground to save his political career Punjabi and Bihari businessmen soon dominated the political scene in Bengal They raised the slogan of Jehad (Holy War) against the infidels (Hindus) There were widespread riots in Calcutta which resulted in the death of many innocent people

The humiliating Treaty of Serves which dismembered the Turkish Empire in 1920 again brought a majority of the

Muslims nearer to the Congress In 1920 however Jinnah left the Congress on the issue of the Non Co operation Movement He was opposed to lawlessness of any kind. The Nehru Report tore apart the nationalist Muslims It is said that this brought about the final parting of ways between Jinnah and the Congress

In the meantime Fazlul Huq formed Krishak Proja Party of Bengal His appeal rested on the socio economic compulsion of the Muslim Bengal where an impoverished Muslim pesantary were subjected to the grind of landlordism a class largely composed of Hindus[26] In the field of social reforms it was the only Muslim organisation to have a concrete programme envisaging abolition of the deeply entrenched zamindari system[27] restrictions on large scale holdings and relief from usury[28] This naturally attracted the Muslim pesantary towards the Krishak Proja Party However the Muslim League s movement for the establishment of Pakistan was simultaneously gaining momentum This movement had the support of religious leaders big industrialists and big businessmen. When Congress leaders refused to accommodate the League s representatives in their ministries in the United Provinces and other Hindu majority provinces the Muslim League started a widespread anti Congress anti Hindu agitation, claiming for itself the distinction of being the sole representative of Indian Muslims. Any Muslim who cooperated with the Congress was dubbed as a traitor or an agent of the Hindus Impelled by the tense atmosphere created by this campaign, many non League provincial organisations including the Krishak Proja Party in Bengal had to join hands with the Muslim League[29]

In June 1938 Fazlul Huq formed a coalition government comprising representatives of the Krishak Proja Party the Muslim League and the Hindu landlords. In this way arch reactionaries and sycophants like Khwaja Nazimuddin Nawab Habibullah Bahadur of Dacca and Khan Bahadur Khwaja [illegible] Hussain who were bitterly opposed to all persons of social [illegible] came to power as representatives

of the Muslim League Naturally they could not support the policies and programmes of the Krishak Proja Party because this would have meant the extinction of their own class This led to an anomalous situation[30] To keep the government going Fazul Huq combined in himself the Presidentship of both the Muslim League and the Krishak Proja Party[31]

In the meantime leadership of the Muslim League continued its anti-Hindu anti Congress campaign unabated Jinnah levelled serious charges of atrocities against Muslims in the Congress-governed provinces He appointed a Committee to enquire into these charges under the Chairmanship of Fazlul Huq Fazlul Huq charged the Congress governments with conspiring to crush the language and culture of the Muslims In his own province he was persuaded to give preference to Muslims in the services While the non-Muslim Press severely criticised this policy the Muslim Press welcomed his moves At one time he was provoked while defending his policies into aying We are in majority In case no suitable Muslims are available for government jobs we are entitled to bring suitable Muslims even from Arabia [32] The controversy brought the Muslims of Bengal clo er to the All India Muslim League Jinnah became the unchallenged leader of the majority of the Indian Muslims As he claimed his organisation to be the sole representative of the Muslims he took strong measures to enforce his discipline over his followers throughout the country He knew Fazlul Huq wielded considerable authority in Bengal and was conscious and jealous of his position at the provincial level since he suspected he could rebel against the Muslim League at any time It was perhaps to check this danger that Jinnah engineered the historic re olution in the Lahore Session of the Muslim League in 1940 Fazlul Huq obliged Jinnah and committed himself to the discipline of the League However Fazlul Huq was a born rebel In 1941, when he accepted his nomination on the National Defence Council without seeking permission from Jinnah the latter asked him to resign from the N D C This irked Fazlul Huq who on September

1941 submitted not only his resignation from the N D C but also resigned from the membership of the Working Committee and the Council of All India Muslim League in protest against the arbitrary use of power by its President In a statement issued to the Press he said

> The genius of the Bengali race revolts against autocracy and I could not therefore help protesting against the autocracies of a single individual [32]

Ministers belonging to the Muslim League had to quit the Cabinet A section of the Muslim League M L A s however joined hands with Fazlul Huq who formed the Progressive Coalition Party in the Bengal Assembly He claimed that he was still President of the Provincial Muslim League. In retaliation Khwaja Nazimuddin, the Nawab of Dacca H S Suhrawardy and others formed their own Muslim League Legislature Party and pronounced their unflinching loyalty to Jinnah Jinnah severely criticised the activities of Fazlul Huq and said

> Fazlul Huq has been a party to intrigues with other groups and has broken away from the Muslim League. He has been now for some considerable time trying to stab the Muslim League in the back [33]

The matter did not end here Jinnah expelled Fazlul Huq from the membership of the Muslim League Thus the gentleman who sponsored the Lahore Resolution of 1940 for the creation of Pakistan was thrown out of the organisation. Fazlul Huq threatened to challenge this order in a court of law [35] It cannot be denied that Fazlul Huq wielded tremendous force in the Muslim politics of Bengal Jinnah s action caused a terrific furore Begum Ikramullah who was very close to her cousin Hussain Shahid Suhrawardy writes thus

> At this juncture i e 1941 the Muslim League was still a very small and unimportant organisation while Fazlul Huq was one of the giants of the sub continent He maintained—and there were many of them to support him—that he was every bit as good as Qaid i Azam himself and was not going to take orders from him [36]

Dissident Congress members under the leadership of Sarat Chander Bose Anglo-Indian and European members Nationalist Muslims and Scheduled Caste members joined hands with Fazlul Huq who formed his second coalition cabinet on December 12 1941 Members of the Muslim League and Kiron Shanker Roy s group of the Congress sat in opposition The Muslim League succeeded in winning over a number of members of the coalition party and passing a no-confidence motion against the Ministry As a result of this Fazlu Hul had to submit his resignation on March 29 1943 The Governor asked Khwaja Nazimuddin to form his ministry Jinnah hailed this event as the victory of the Muslim League

Both Khizer Hayat (Chief Minister of Punjab) and Fazl-ul Huq charged Jinnah with playing the role of a dictator While the latter failed to oust Khizar from power his writ ran in Bengal and his interference in the provincial affairs continued unabated During a general discussion on the budget in the Bengal Assembly in February 1944 Fazlul Huq attacked Jinnah and the provincial government thus

> The provincial automomy is non existent and the State Government is suppliant to Jinnah to the extent that the dictates of the dicator totally ignore the real feelings of the people [37]

In the struggle between the Congress and the Muslim League British authorities supported the latter While in the Punjab the British officers encouraged the Muslim League to launch an agitation against Khizer Hayat s Unionist Coalition Ministry which included Congress Ministers the British officers in Bengal wanted to strengthen the position of Khwaja Nazimuddin On March 28 1945 twenty-eight government supporters crossed the floor with the result that Khwaja Nazimuddin s government suffered defeat on a snap vote The Speaker adjourned the Assembly *sine die*, saying that as a result of this defeat the government was no longer in office The Governor Lord Casey disliked the attitude of the Speaker and instead on calling the majority leader

Fazlul Huq to form an alternative ministry he promulgated Governor's rule under section 93

It will be recalled that even in March 1943 Fazlul Huq was in a position to form an alternative ministry after his defeat but as he puts it he was decoyed into signing the letter of resignation" of his office[38] With the same motive in view the Governor deprived the opposition leader his right to form an alternative government In his book *Personal Experience* Lord Casey criticised the twenty eight members who had crossed the floor as also the Speaker He says

> It was my function to say whether there was a ministry in office and not the Speaker's This was the last straw [39]

Elections in 1946 made H S Suhrawardy the man of the hour He won a majority for the Muslim League He was allowed to form government He supported the demand for Pakistan. Under instructions from Mr Jinnah the Muslim League members decided to boycott the proceedings of the Constituent Assembly Suhrawardy supported his demand for setting up two constitution making bodies. Highly provocative speeches were made in the Muslim League Convention held in Delhi from April 7 to April 10 1946 Sir Feroze Khan Noon a former member of the Viceroy's Executive Council threatened for instance to follow in the footsteps of Changez and Timur to achieve the political goal of the Muslim League[40] Before the Convention was dissolved the Muslim League Party members in the Central and provincial legislatures took an oath pledging to undergo any danger trial or sacrifice which may be demanded for the attainment of Pakistan [41]

Jinnah threatened violence to attain his goal He asked his followers to hold what he called a 'Direct Action Day' on August 16 1946 For Suhrawardy a man of great ambitions it was a golden opportunity to demonstrate his power over Bengali Muslims and his enthusiasm for Pakistan [42] He announced that August 16 would be a general holiday in

It is said that a Bengali genius Abdul Hashim a man of Burdwan met Sarat Chander Bose Suhrawardy and Bhashani and told them that the establishment of an Independent State of United Bengal was the real solution to the problem

On May 20 Sarat Chander Bose convened a meeting at his residence which was attended by Suhrawardy Fazlur Rehman Mohammad Ali Bogra Abdul Hasham Abdul Mallick Kiran Shanker Roy and Satya Ranjan Bakshi. It is said that a tentative agreement to keep Bengal united was arrived at Mr Bose and Hasham signed the document

In view of its historic importance I quote the text in extenso

(1) Bengal will be a State The Free State of Bengal will decide its relations with the rest of India

(2) The Constitution of the Free State of Bengal will provide for election to the Bengal Legislature on the basis of joint electorate and adult franchise with reservation of seats proportionate to the population amongst Hindus and Muslims

The seats as between Hindus and Scheduled Caste Hindus will be distributed amongst them in proportion to their respective population or in such manner as may be agreed to among them

The constitution will be multiple constituencies and the votes will be distributive and not cumulative

A candidate who gets the majority of the votes of his own community cast during the elections and 25 per cent of the votes of the other communities so cast will be declared elected

If no candidate satisfied these conditions that candidate who gets the largest number of votes of his own community will be elected

(3) *On the announcement of His Majesty's Government* that the proposal of the Free State of Bengal has been accepted and that Bengal will not be partitioned the present Bengal Ministry will be dissolved and a new

Interim Ministry brought into being consisting of an equal number of Muslims and Hindus (including Scheduled Caste Hindus) but excluding the Chief Minister

In this Ministry the Chief Minister will be a Muslim and the Home Minister a Hindu

(4) Pending the final emergence of a legislature and a Ministry under the new constitution the Hindus (including Scheduledcaste Hindus) will have an equal share in the Services including military and police The Services will be manned by Bengalis

(5) A Constituent Assembly composed of 30 persons—16 Muslims and 14 non Muslims—will be elected by the Muslim and non Muslim members of the Legislature respectively excluding the Europeans

This agreement was to be ratified first by the provincial organisations of both the Congress and the League and eventually by their High Commands

On May 22, Sarat Chander Bose communicated the terms to Mahatma Gandhi who replied as follows

Patna 24-5-1947

My dear Sarat

I have your note. There is nothing in the draft stipulating that nothing will be done by mere majority

Every act of Government must carry with it the co-operation of at least two-thirds of the Hindu members in the Executive and the Legislature.

There should be an admission that Bengal has common culture and common mother tongue—Bengali

Make sure that the Central Muslim League approves of the proposal notwithstanding reports to the contrary

If your presence is necessary in Delhi I shall telephone or telegraph I propose to discuss the draft with the Working Committee

Yours
Bapu

The two parties met again and revised the draft To clause (1) was added this stipulation *The question of joining any Union will be decided by the Legislature of the Free State of Bengal by a two thirds majority*

Clause (2) was amended to lay greater emphasis on joint electorates and on communal co operation

Its last sentence was altered to make the requirement of 25 per cent of the votes of the other community compulsory in addition to the largest number of votes of the candidate s own community Failing this the candidate who gets the largest number of votes out of the total votes polled will be elected But as Mr A G Noorani points out the draft stipulated an over all two thirds majority for future affiliation of the State and not the two thirds of the Hindu members as Gandhiji had advised

Still a lot of progress had been made Only Calcutta knew not that things had undergone such a radical change in Delhi as to knock out the basis of a sovereign united Bengal

The negotiations had been proceeding on the basis of the Viceroy s original plan of demission of authority to the provinces [47]

As pointed out earlier the British Governor of Bengal supported this move The Viceroy s representatives Lord Ismay and Mr George Abell had already left for London on May 2 to seek the British Government s approval for the Viceroy s proposals This was received on May 10 subject to certain revisions The Viceroy showed the revised draft to Pandit Nehru who rejected the proposal and said that this proposal would encourage disruptive tendencies everywhere and chaos and weakness He wanted transfer of power to the Centre or to two Centres not to the provinces directly Perhaps he knew that the British Governor of Punjab was supporting a similar move for his province [49] and it would have led to the creation of several independent States that would have sought direct affiliation with the British Common

wealth The Viceroy informed London of Nehru s reactions and was summoned home to clarify matter He returned on May 30 In the meantime Mr V P Menon had prepared an alternative plan which was also discussed in London The Viceroy informed Suhrawardy that the changed scheme of things left little room for provincial autonomy However he told him that if the Bengal Assembly were to pass a resolution asking for independence he would certainly consider it in the light of the Government s recommendations [19]

Lord Mountbatten s adviser Mr Hudson writes

> Mr Suhrawardy had reported that since their previous discussion he had been conferring with Mr Kiron Shankar Roy about keeping Bengal united and had brought in Mr Sarat Chandra Bose the Socialist leader (brother of Subhas Commander of the Indian National Army)
>
> They had made good progress and on the whole he was hopeful There had been talk of declaring Bengal a Socialist Republic on which point the Viceroy emphasised the complications of Commonwealth membership
>
> He also warned Mr Suhrawardy that Pandit Nehru was not in favour of an independent Bengal unless it was closely linked with India after partition feeling as he did that the exigencies of partition would anyhow cause East Bengal to return to India in a few years time
>
> Nevertheless Lord Mountbatten promised that if an agreement were reached on a Hindu Muslim coalition Ministry in Bengal he would do his utmost to get the national leaders with Mr Gandhiji s help to accept this and to agree that the final announcement should contain no reference to the partition of Bengal

The plan fizzled out because in the meantime the High Commands of both the parties came down publicly against the plan On May 28 the Working Committee of the Provincial Muslim League passed a resolution declaring that it had nothing to do with the proposals that have been published in certain newspapers for the settlement of a Constitution for Bengal The Working Committee stands

firmly by the Muslim League demand for Pakistan and declares that Mr Jinnah is the sole authority to negotiate the future Constitution [49]

The same day the General Secretary of the All India Congress Committee issued a statement repudiating the United Independent Bengal formula [50]

Mr Sarat Chandra Bose however was determined to continue his efforts to keep Bengal united He aid I have conviction in my proposal and hall stick to it to the last He aid that he never objected to Bengal remaining within the proposed Indian Union What I ay is that only a free Bengal can decide her relations with the rest of India [51]

It eems that in the beginning Jinnah was not oppo ed to this plan becau e he had already issued a statement that the propo al for the partition of Bengal was a sinister move act ated by spite and bitterness a However he had begun to doubt Suhrawardy s sincerity

The Viceroy gave up this plan and on June 3 1947 announced his plan for the partition of the country including Bengal and Punjab

On June 8 Gandhiji wrote to Bose thus

I have gone through your draft I have now discus ed the scheme roughly with Pandit Nehru and the Sardar Both of them are dead against the propo al and they are of opinion that it is merely a trick for dividing Hindus and Scheduled Caste leaders

With them it is not merely a suspicion but almost a conviction

They feel also that money is being lavishly expended in order to secure Scheduled Caste vote

If such is the case you should give up the struggle at least at pre ent For the unity purcha ed by corrupt practices would be wor e than a frank partition it being a recognition of the established divi ion of hearts and the unfortunate experiences of Hindus

I see also that there is no prospect of transfer of power outside the two parts of India

On June 14 Sarat Chandra Bose wrote to Gandhiji denying the charges about bribery and trickery He said

'I have not the slightest doubt that if a referendum were taken the Hindus of Bengal by a large majority would vote against partition

He appealed Mr Jinnah to reconsider over his decision. He said Bengal is passing through greatest crisis in history but she can yet be saved The request I am making to you is in accordance with the views you expressed to me when we met But it seems to me that if you merely express your views to your members and not give them specific instructions as to how to vote the situation cannot be saved If Muslim members of the Bengal Legislative Assembly vote solidly as suggested I think Lord Mountbatten will be compelled to convene another meeting of all members of the Assembly (other than Europeans) at which a decision can be taken on the issue as to whether the Province as a whole desires to have a Constituent Assembly of her own

On June 20 members of the Bengal Legislative Assembly met together and voted by 126 votes to 90 to join Pakistan The representatives of West Bengal therefore met and voted for partition of the province by 58 votes to 21 [53]

Dr S Jeelani then Chief Editor of Jinnah s Calcutta daily Morning News tells thus

Both Sarat Chandra Bose and Suhrawardy fell in love with this idea I met the Trio at Sarat s residence and it was decided that I lay the plan before Jinnah But while I was on way to Delhi Suhrawardy leaked the news to the Press He had expected that Jinnah would welcome the idea and he wanted to take the whole credit to himself

I arrived at Delhi six hours after Jinnah and Nehru had denounced the move Shyama Prasad Mukerjee also dismissed it out of hand but for another entirely different reason When I met Jinnah he asked me to return to Calcutta and tell Suhrawardy that he was a traitor and wanted to sell Pakistan to the Hindus

By a lucky coincidence Dr Mukerjee was on the same plane which I took back to Calcutta He had a soft corner for me and told me frankly that a One Bengal could not be entertained as it was bound to become a state where Bengali Muslims would be in overwhelming majority which was sure not to tolerate the Hindu minority having already imbibed the poison which Jinnah had provided [4]

The conception of a united Independent Bengal practically died at this stage but the fire of rebellion against autocracy that was kindled by Fazlul Huq in 1941 smouldered

The British rulers used to dub in Bengalis as a non martial race overlooking the fact that Bengalis had their own traditions of revolution. The Indigo Revolt the Swadeshi movement of 1905 and revolutionary movements of the early thirties were in a way fore runners of the subsequent war of independence in April 1930 Young revolutionaries stormed and captured the police armoury in Chittagong They raised the tri colour over police head quarters The fight from the hills and villages continued for three years upto the capture and execution of the young revolutionary leader Surya Sen who wrote the history of revolution with his own blood

Comilla was the hub of revolutionary activities for two decades Here peasants and workers carried on the anti imperliast struggle for many years During the forties Mymensingh was the field of Hajang movement—and Moni Singh is still with the fighters of Bangla Desh though past 70 Such is the tradition that the United Bengal handed on to the people of Bangla Desh

NOTES

1 The battle of Buxar (October 23 1769) was a significantly decisive episode in the history of India It resulted in the defeat of three important rulers of Northern India Emperor Shah Alam II Nawab Shujabuddaula of Oudh and Mir Qasim the expelled Nawab of Bengal Shah Alam II threw himself almost at the mercy of the British (K K Datta *A Survey of Studies on Modern Indian History* Patna 1957 page 53)

2 D N Bannerjee East *Pakistan A Case Study in Muslim Polices*, (Vikas Publications Delhi 1969) p 4

3 *Ibid* page 6

4 Major B D Basu *Ruins of Indian Industries* (Calcutta 1935) p 120

5 Major J B Keith in the *Pioneer* September 7, 1898

6 Major B D Basu op cit page 129

7 *Ibid* pp 35 36

8 Blair B Kling *The Blue Mutiny* 1916 p 8

9 Gopal Haldar Bengla Desh and its Fighting Traditions in the *Main stream* April 24 1971

10 Sen Dr Sachin *The Birth of Pakistan* (Calcutta General Printing and Publishing Co 1955) p 14

11 *Political Conspiracies in Pakistan* op cit page 61

12 C H Phillips *The Evolution of India and Pakistan* (1962) p 515 It was due to the suggestion made by Colonel Caroline Fredrick Scott that the Rajputs of Bihar were recruited in the Bengal Army (cf C R Wilson *Fort William Bengal* Vol II page 74)

13 R Prasad *India Divided* (Hind Kitab Bombay 1947) p 111

14 *The Birth of Pakistan* op cit p 52

15 S Gopal British Policy in India 1857 to 1905 (Cambridge) p 269

16. Lady Minto *India Minto and Morley* pp 45 98

17 Lal Bahadur *The Muslim League* p 49

18 Sher-e-Bengal Supplement *Pakistan Observer* Dacca April 27 1967

19 D N Banerjee *East Pakistan* op cit page 15

20 K K Aziz *The Making of Pakistan A Study in Nationalism* (London 1967) p [illegible]

21 D A Low (Ed) *Soundings in Modern South Asian History* 2nd Edition (London [illegible]) p 231

22. D N Banerjee *East Pakistan* op cit page 15

23. *Ibid*

24 *Ibid* page 1[illegible] W C Smith *Modern Islam in India* (Lahore 1946) p 171

25 *Twenty Years of Pakistan* 1947 1967 (Pakistan Publications Karachi 1967) p 39
26 D N Ban rj e *East Pakistan* op cit pag 3?
27 Zamindari system which mad th real p asants as slav to their f udal lords was enf r d by th Viceroy Lord Dalhousi It was aim d at str ngth ning th foundat ons of th Briti h Empir
28 I Ansari *Pakistan the Proll m of India* (Lal ore 1945) p 60 6
29 In the Punjab l ad rs of the dominating Unionist Party had to join the Muslim Leagu Although th Unionist Party was a non Communal organi ation of big landlords its l ader Sir Sikand r Hayat played a clev r trick to stall Jinnah s mov Whil h kept th separat entity of his party aliv h and other Muslim memb rs of the Unionist Party joined the Muslim L ague It was in this way that he succeed d to control the Muslim League organi ation in the Punjab In the el ctions of th Punjab Assembly held in 1937 only two candidates belonging to the Leagu had won s ats On of th m Raja Gha afar Ali Khan had joined the Unionist Party while the other (Malik Barkat Ali) sat in opposition
30 D N Ban rj e *East Pakistan* op it page 30
31 Sher e Bengal Suppl ment *Pakistan Observ r* April 27 1967 Later on H S Suhrawardy and Tajuddin wer also included in the mini try They w re repr s ntatives of the Muslim League
32 *Daily Zamindar* Lahore Septemb r 11 1939
33 *The Ind an Annual Register* 1941 Vol II pp 18-19
34 *Ibid* pp 148 49 Similarly the Chief Mini ter of Punjab Khizar Hayat Tiwana was exp lled by Jinnah in 1961 becau e the former had refused to merge his Unionist Party with the Muslim League
35 Daily *Zamindar* Lahore D ember 29 1949
36 B gum Shaistsa Ikramullah *From Purdah to Parliament* (London 1963) pag 104
37 *The Indian Annual Register* 1944 Vol I p 179
38 A K Fa lul Huq *Bengal Today* Calcutta L cember 1944 p 5
39 Lord Casey *Personal Experiences* 1939 1946 (London 1962) p 224
40 *Daily Jai Hind* Lahor April 1? 1946
41 *The Indian Annnal Reg ster* 1946 I p 144
42 Leonard Mosely *The Last Days of the British Raj* (Jaico Bombay 1968) p 27
43 *Ibid*
44 *Ibid* pp 34 35
45 *Ibid*
46 B gum Ikramullah op cit pag 156
47 A G Noorani *Plan for a United B ngal* *The Indian Express* May 9 1971 (Maga in Section) pag II

48 Leonard Mosley *The Last Days of the British Raj* (Jaico 1968) Page 233
49 *The Amrit Bazar Patrika* May 29 1947
50 *Ibid*
51 *The Statesman* June 2 1947
52 V P Menon *The Transfer of Power In India* (Orient Longmans 1968) Page 360
53 *Ibid* June 21 1947
54 Dr S Jeelany *Musings on Mujib s Bengal* *Published* in *Daily Motherland* Delhi April 17 1971

being watched by the CID Her correspondence was censored and her telephonic talks tapped[1] Miss Jinnah could not forget that when her brother was dying Liaquat Ali was busy hatching political conspiracies to further his own interests She welcomed Suhrawardy because in him she found a person who could challenge the authority of Liaquat Ali Khan Fatima s blessings strengthened his hands Even the progressive and pro communist elements in West Punjab headed by Mian Iftakharuddin supported him Ahrar leaders like Sheikh Hassamuddin and Shorash Kashmiri welcomed him In the N W F P disgruntled leaders headed by Pir Manki Sharif joined hands with him Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan s Red Shirts found in him a bold leader to support the cause of democracy Influential newspapers like the *Niwai Waqt Pakistan Times Imroze* and *Chattan* boosted his personality In Sind old nationalists like G M Syed and Abdul Majid Sindhi welcomed him In East Bengal Maulana Bhashani Sheikh Mujib ur Rehman and other stalwarts flocked around him Suhrawardy s Awami Muslim League founded by Maulana Bhashani became a strong national political organisation which could challenge the authority of Liaquat Ali Khan and his faction-ridden Muslim League

Understandably Liaquat was very much upset by the growing popularity of Suhrawardy and his Awami League He denounced him as a traitor Since however Suhrawardy had the support of Fatima Jinnah still deeply respected among the people the result was that the Press started denouncing Liaquat Ali The powerful Urdu daily of Lahore *Niwai Waqt*, defended Suhrawardy s activities in India thus

> Suhrawardy is a selfless leader of the nation. When other leaders left the Muslims of India to their fate he was the only leader who risked his life to save them No doubt he was thinking in terms of an Independent Bengal but if he had succeeded in achieving his objective the proposed

Independent Bengal would have become a part of Pakistan ultimately [3]

There is no doubt that despite his shortcomings Suhrawardy was able to make his image strong in Pakistan by espousing the cause of democracy He did not demand an independent sovereign status for East Bengal but he did support internal autonomy for the Eastern Wing He was known as a leader of progressive movements in Pakistan

As far as East Bengal was concerned the glamour of Pakistan with its high sounding slogans faded soon after the establishment of the new State The ministry in East Bengal headed by Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin failed to enforce any agrarian reforms It did not draw up any plans to reduce unemployment Muslim officers and industrialists from West Punjab and N W F P succeeded in dominating the administration and industry The Chief Secretary A z Ahmad was

Bengalis All this was bound to create resentment among the Bengali Thus as early as 1948 it was reported A feeling is growing among the Bengalis that their province is being neglected and treated as a mere colony of Western Pakistan [5]

It may be recalled that the Chief Minister of East Bengal Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin was a member of the distinguished feudal family of the Nawabs of Dacca that had for several generations played an active part in the Muslim communal movement heading its orthodox wing on the extreme right [6] He was closely connected with the Muslim landowners in East Bengal and with the leading circles of the orthodox Muslim divines He was knighted for his services to the British Raj But all said and done he was a weak man not very intelligent and easily handled [7] Since he represented big landlords he was opposed to land reforms As the Punjabi officers dominated the administration, he could not raise his voice in support of Bengali Muslims with the result that as time passed people started hating him This hatred and restlessness resulted ultimately in a widespread agitation which was suppressed by the Army headed by Ayub Khan

While Khwaja Nazimuddin wanted West Pakistanis help to remain in saddle Bengali elements resented this behaviour Colonel Ahmad wrote

> Most of the senior officers had come from West Pakistan feeling too unhappy to be discreet They would complain in extremely bitter terms (about the environment of rural East Bengal and lack of luxury and comforts of urban areas) even in the presence of East Pakistanis whom they blamed for all the misery and inconvenience A thousand mile wide gulf already existed geographically between the people of the two provinces Temerity and impudence of the West Pakistanis was widening it emotionally much further [8]

A Bengali Muslim Abdul Salam who was then incharge of Civil Supplies Accounts later wrote

It may be a news to many even today that for months after August 1947 the Provincial Government was kept running by the sale proceed of the Civil Supplies food stuffs only Monies due to Provincial Government were not being transferred to its accounts through the inaptitude of the Central Government officials concerned Even at this date the patriotism of Bengalis was being questioned to serve the nefarious designs of some people [9]

Although Khwaja Nazimuddin was appointed Governor General of Pakistan the Central Government s attitude towards East Bengal did not change An inquiry against Hamidul Huq Chaudhuri was ordered by the Governor General although the decision was taken at the advice of Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan who had made him an ineffective Head of the State An eminent Pakistani author testifies to this thus

> Khwaja Nazimuddin succeeded to the office of the Governor General but not to the authority that Quide Azam had wielded This office was offered to him by Liaquat Ali Liaquat s very first act was to take over the portfolio of the State and the Frontier regions from the Governor General an act that was symptomatic of the shift in power from the Governor General to the Prime Minister The practice of Governor General presiding over the Cabinet meetings had almost ceased [10]

That Khwaja Nazimuddin was a puppet in the hands of Liaquat Ali is proved by the former s evidence before the Court of Enquiry constituted in 1953 to enquire into the disturbances in the Punjab He said

> As far as Quide Azam (Jinnah) was concerned I did not have the opportunity of meeting him after Partition and discussing the future constitution of Pakistan. As far as Quid-e Milla (Liaquat Ali Khan) was concerned I did no take much interest in ... Only at the time the Basic Principles Committee had been appointed and I was dealing with the question. Quid - Milla himself was

responsible for the Objectives Resolution and over ruled all opposition to it in the Muslim League Parliamentary Party [11]

Khwaja Nazimuddin and his Chief Minister in East Bengal Nurul Amin were helpless because they depended upon the West Pakistani rulers for safeguarding their own political position Ayub Khan had saved Nazimuddin s Ministry in East Bengal by deploying his army against the students and pea ants in 1948 Nurul Amin depended upon Prime Minister Liaquat Ali against the restless and indignant masses led by Fazlul Huq Suhrawardy and Bhashani Liaquat Ali and other old guardse disliked Suhrawardy He had refused to allow the Muslim League Party in the East Bengal Assembly to elect its new leader after Nazimuddin s appointment as Governor-General of Pakistan Instead he instructed the Governor to appoint Nurul Amin as the new Chief Minister Suhrawardy had left the organisation and joined the Awami (Muslim League already formed by Maulana Bhashani A number of their supporters in the Muslim League left it to join the new organisation In these circumstances Nurul Amin had to play the role of a second fiddle to save his own skin In the process Awami League became the champion of the Bengali masses

Muslim masses in East Bengal builders of Pakistan were disillusioned They felt that real power was gravitating towards the West. In such a situation East Bengals political leaders found themselves not even as the *mansabdars* of the Karachi rulers They felt neglected and batrayed as the West made increasing inroads into their sphere of action and authority [12] Although Bengalis were in a majority in the overall population of Pakistan they had no voice in the Central administration there being just one I C S officer from the eastern wing In the bureaucracy military or civil East Bengal remained almost unrepresented As a Pakistani writer puts it 'In East Pakistan the representatives elected were lawyers teachers religious leaders professional politicians and clerks most of whom wanted maximum provincial

autonomy and resented the strong administrative control from Karachi The situation was aggravated by the fact that the Central bureaucrats had been overwhelmingly drawn from West Pakistan[13] Naturally the bureaucrats supported their own political leaders who were determined to keep East Bengal in their grip They could not allow Bengalis to dominate Pakistan simply by virtue of being in majority They had struggled for the establishment of Pakistan to throw off the domination of the Hindus and to rule over the country They were determined not to allow Bengalis to share this authority No doubt Bengalis were Muslims but as far as their culture religion and ethnic traits were concerned they were foreigners The slogan of Islamic unity was in fact meant to keep their mouths shut Equal share in the services meant reduction of their own share in administration Landlord officers and politicians from West Pakistan just could not afford to enforce land reforms

People in East Bengal however wanted to enjoy the fruits of freedom They wanted their due share in administration as well as in political life The oppressed peasantry expected enforcement of radical agrarian reforms The colonial legacy and the politics of the ruling bloc of landlords and big industrialists robbed the people of East Bengal of the fruits of independence The Islamic State gave them neither agrarian reforms nor better living During the first year after the establishment of Pakistan the cost of living of factory and office workers showed a disastrous upward trend No improvement was observed in the following years Labour conditions at plantations most of them still owned by British interests were unbearable Plantation labourers who numbered 80 000 85 000 in 1948 1950 did not have any benefit of labour legislation Contracted workers were in effect bondsmen of the contractors and planters Not only they but their children too were forbidden to seek part time earning elsewhere[14] on the pretext that the Islamic State would itself see to the welfare of the working people

The Government thus practically snatched the right of the workers to strike

Peasant unrest broke out that autumn in Mymensingh Jessore Khulna and few other districts In Sylhet the village of Haldar was the centre of the movement. Peasants refused to work for the landlords demanded abolition of nankar system wanted cash payment in return for their labour and insisted on their heriditary right to the plo s they received from their landlords A conference of students convened in Mymensingh, and a meeting of the League of Democratic Youth convened in Rajshahi, supported the abolition of the property rights of landlords and pleaded for immediate relief to the peasants The Kisan Samiti issued a call for the abolition of such rights without compensation As the Muslim League was opposed to all such demands, the leadership of these movements went into the hands of Communists who had among their ranks a number of Hindus [15] The Muslim League leaders who were playing into the hands of big landlords denounced Communist leaders as 'enemy agents [16] In Jessore District 85 peasant leaders were arrested in the autumn of 1948 Punitive police units volunteers of the Muslim League and hired goondas of big landlords attacked the peasants Their houses were looted and destroyed Their owners were forced to run away and some of them were killed or wounded [17]

Punjabi settlers and Muslim refugees who came from Bihar were incited to attack the enemy agents These fanatics soon became a powerful bastion of reaction and communalism With the connivance and help of the non-Bengali officers these elements organised communal riots in which a number of persons lost their lives Members of the Police force took active part in these provocations—looting Hindu villages and attacking and killing peaceful peasants [18] Undoubtedly the organisers of these riots wanted to kill two birds with one stone they wanted to safeguard the interests of big landlords and also to push the maximum number of Bengali Hindus out of the Eastern

wing to turn the majority of the Bengali speaking population into a minority

According to the census of 1951 Urdu was the mother tongue of only 2 4 million citizens in Pakistan which constituted 3 3 percent of the population Only 7.3 percent of the total population could speak Urdu at all While 98 percent of the inhabitants of Bengal spoke Bengali only 1 1 percent of the population[19] knew Urdu This led to the inescapable conclusion that Urdu was not the national language of the people of Pakistan Bengalis were proud of their language It was because of its secular and liberal features that it could influence both Hindu and Muslim leaders The rulers of Pakistan including Jinnah and Liaquat Ali saw in the situation a lurking danger of Bengali nationalism They were aware that East Bengal in addition to being so distant from Karachi was also the home of Bengali culture and that its people were in an overall majority in the country They also knew that in Parliamentary democracy the majority had the right to rule the country In order to ward off this danger the rulers decided to suppress the Bengali language which was the root cause of the secular outlook of the Bengalis They raised the slogans of Islamic unity' and suggested that Urdu which was written in the Arabic script and had a strong admixture of Arabic and Persian words should be the State language of Pakistan This proposal enraged the Bengalis whose representatives in the Constituent Assembly were not allowed even to speak in Bengali[19] It was an unwise[20] step bu even Jinnah insisted on it In the eyes of those who wielded power Bengali was a language of un Islamic origin. In February 1948 a minority member of the Constituent Assembly Dhirendra Nath Dutta moved an amendment in the Rules of the House to allow members to speak in Bengali Prime Minister Liaquat Ali rebuked him thus

> Pakistan is a Muslim State and it must have as its *lingua franca* the language of the Muslims [The mover] should realise that Pakistan has been created because of the

demand of a hundred million Muslims in the sub-continent and the language of the hundred million Muslims is Urdu It is necessary for a nation to have one language and [for us] this language can only be Urdu and no other language [21]

The Muslim League members from East Bengal could afford to keep quiet in Karachi Even the Chief Minister of East Bengal Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin did not utter a word against this statement But the Bengali Muslim student were filled with anger To say that Bengali language was un Islamic was an insult to their sentiments They set up an Action Committee and drew up a series of demands Their demonstrations caused a great deal of alarm in the official circles in Dacca and undoubtedly worried Nazimuddin As Jinnah was to visit Dacca on March 19 1948 the Chief Minister wanted to avoid ugly scenes He arranged a meeting with the Action Committee where he accepted all the following demands

1. The East Bengal Assembly should adopt a resolution making Bengali the official language in East Bengal and the medium of instruction in schools and college

2 The East Bengal Assembly should by another resolution recommend to the Central Government that Bengali be made one of the official languages

3 All prisoners arrested during the movement should be released

4 Ban on newspapers which gave support and publicised the movement should be lifted

5 A commission should be set up immediately to investigate into the atrocities committed on the students by the police and their Commanding Officers

6 It should be declared that the movement was inspired by highly patriotic motives and sentiments and the Chief Minister should say o in a broadcast over the Dacca Radio

7 All warrants of arrest against workers of political parties who had joined in the movement should be withdrawn

8 The Chief Minister should withdraw his previous statement in which he called the agitators Communists and agents of the enemies of the State

The Punjabi dominated bureaucracy was displeased over the agreement On his arrival at Dacca Jinnah's mind was poisoned by this bureaucracy He was advised to repudiate this agreement At his very first public meeting in Dacca the audience left in protest against his announcement that Urdu must be the only State language Angry students held violent demonstrations against him All schools and colleges were closed Students removed Jinnah s portraits from their chools and colleges[22] Their real day arrived on March 24 when Jinnah went to address the Convocation of the University The students demanded recognition of Bengali language as a State language at par with Urdu The Father of the Nation as Jinnah was called was annoyed over the arrogance He roared

> Is it not significant that the very persons who in the past have betrayed Musalmans or fought against Pakistan which is after all merely the embodiment of your funda mental right of self determination should now suddenly pose as the saviours of just rights and incite you to defy the Government on the question of language ? I mu t warn you to beware of these fifth columnists Let me make it very clear to you that the State langurge of Pakistan is going to be Urdu and no other language Anyone who tries to mislead you is really the enemy of Pakistan[23]

The students refused to swallow this insult. Jinnah had challenged their *bona fides* They were dubbed as enemies of Pakistan simply because they were proud of their language Jinnah could toletate Egnlish but he wanted to crush Bengali which was the language of the majority of Pakistani Mu lims The students reacted violently and staged a big demonstration against him and the ensuing chaos made it impossible for him to finish his speech At a later discus-

sion with the Students Action Committee the atmosphere became heated and the meeting ended in stalemate [4]

Before leaving for Karachi on March 28 he gave another warning to the spokesmen of the Bengalis The latter were condemned as enemies of the Islamic State of Pakistan [2]

In the words of an eminent author the Pakistani ruling class never excused the Bengalis for their tenacious support to Bengali language [26] In their eyes Bengali was a vestige of the Hindu past which in the new state they were seriously bent upon erasing

In September 1948 Jinnah died He was succeeded by Khwaja Nazimuddin but Liaquat Ali managed to become all powerful in his capacity as the Prime Minister though he had to face serious difficulties from the beginning He failed to capture the popular imagination because he had no economic or social programme to offer He had no solid base of his own in Pakistan The Pro-British refugee leader Chaudhuri Khaliq u Zaman was president of the Muslim League He was supported by the Chief Ministers of Punjab and N W F P the Nawab of Mamdot and Khan Abdul Qayyum Jinnah s death gave Khaksars an opportunity to adopt threatening posture to the Government. Pakistan s failure to grab Kashmir gave Liaquat s political opponents an excuse to launch campaigns against him Jamaat Islami denounced his liberal views Its leaders attacked Begum Liaquat Ali Khan for non observance of Purdah Refugees held demonstrations against him because no provincial government in West Pakistan seemed prepared to rehabilitate them In order to strengthen his position Liaquat Ali dismissed the Punjab Cabinet headed by the Nawab of Mamdot In 1951 the latter formed the Jinnah Muslim League with the blessings of Fatima Jinnah. Later the Jinnah Muslim League and the Awami Muslim League merged to form the Jinnah Awami League under the presidentship of H S Suhrawardy

Liaquat instigated Urdu speaking refugees in Karachi to launch agitation against Khaliq u Zaman The latter had to resign presidentship of the League. Liaquat Ali then quickly

assumed the presidentship of the organisation. He wanted to capture the organisation by ousting the Chief Ministers of Sindh and N W F P Ayub Khuro and Abdul Qayyum When the former refused to oblige him Liaquat dismissed his ministry and appointed a court of enquiry to investigate into charges levelled against the dismissed Chief Minister However Qayyum Khan defied him He even refused to allow him to speak in a public meeting in Peshawar

The Prime Minister decided to hold general elections to convene a new Constituent Assembly in 1949 Suhrawardy was out to support his candidates in these elections However he was disallowed from entering the N W F P The Muslim League emerged as the majority party in the Constituent Assembly Although Bengali members were in majority they were disunited especially because Liaquat Ali was not prepared to support their demand The Bengalis wanted parity between the two wings in the new Constitutional set up They wanted equal share in the civil ervices and the Army which were dominated by the Punjabis The Bengalis complained that it was due to the preponderance of West Pakistanis that they could not get parity Economic policies formulated under the influence of Punjabi officers had been such that East Bengal remained far behind West Pakistan [27] A Muslim author summed up the situation thus

> Central government expenditure because of the location of Karachi and the concentration of the army in West Pakistan was much greater in West Pakistan than in East Bengal East Bengal contributed much more to foreign exchange earnings of the country than the West and yet it was lagging far behind West Pakistan in economic development The Central plea was that scarce resources were being invested in West Pakistan because its developed economy would yield higher returns than that of East Bengal [8]

West Pakistani elements resisted the demands of the Bengalis The Punjabis were determined to maintain their

control over the country and Liaquat was not prepared to resist their pressure This is evident from the Interim Report of the Basic Principles Committee presented in 1950 It suggested that the Lower House be elected on the basis of population and in the Upper House East Bengal West Punjab N W F P Sind and Baluchistan should be given equal representation For purpose of representation, States, and Centrally administered areas were attached to the province with which they were contiguous This was a clever move to maintain West Pakistan s domination This is evident from the fact that unlike India where Upper House cannot exercise any veto over money matters the two proposed Houses in Pakistan were given equal powers in all matters including money bills In addition it was laid down that in case of dispute decisions were to be taken at joint sessions of both the Houses This meant that West Pakistani representation would remain a dominating factor in any Government that may be formed in Pakistan and Bengalis would have to remain at the mercy of West Pakistanis It also meant that Bengali language would never be able to get its due status There was considerable resentment and opposition from East Bengal Suhrawardy and Fazlul Huq threatened to launch agitations against this move The result was that the Prime Minister had to postpone consideration of these recommendations He invited people at large to send concrete proposals to the Basic Principles Committee of the Constituent Assembly

In this atmosphere of frustration and restles ness Liaquat Ali tried to explore other channels to boost his personality He created war hysteria against India and Afghanistan He gave his countrymen the conception of an Islamic State and International Islamic unity *He convened an International Islamic* Conference in Karachi From his speeches delivered in America it was evident that he was preparing ground to join the American bloc with Pakistan as the leader of the anti-Communist Muslim Front. While fanatical Muslims in East

Bengal organised anti Hindu riots the Prime Minister threatened to invade Kashmir

In the meantime he appointed Ayub Khan as Commander in-Chief of his army with the result that there was considerable unrest in a powerful section of senior officers They conspired to overthrow Liaquat Ali s Government It is said that they planned to abduct Governor-General Khwaja Nazimuddin and replace him by a military dictator The leader of the conspiracy was a senior Punjabi officer Major-General Akbar Khan who had earlier led invasions of Kashmir and Kalat Akbar Khan and a number of other army officers and Communist leaders were arrested on March 9 1951 [9] A Military Court ordered them to long terms of imprisonment However Liaquat Ali was killed on October 16 1951 Although the murderer was an Afghan exile Syed Akbar Khan he was in fact only a pawn in the hands a few politicians including the Finance Minister of Pakistan Ghulam Mohammad the Minister of Kashmir Affairs Mustaq Ahmad Gurmani and the Chief Minister of Khan Abdul N W F P Qayyum Khan [10]

Khwaja Nazimuddin became Prime Minister and the Finance Minister Ghulam Mohammad was nominated the new Governor General of Pakistan

NOTES

1 *Daily Tej* Delhi December 2 1960
2 *Political Conspiracies in Pakistan* op cit pp 81 84
3 Quoted in *Political Conspiracies in Pakistan* op cit p 115
4 *The Political System of Pakistan* op cit Page 61

The points of differences between him and the Central Government, according to the respondent were as follows —

1 He proposed to float a loan but this was not allowed by the Centre
2 He drew up schemes to set up factories but the Centre caused the Constituent Assembly to pass legislation transferring industries to the jurisdiction of the Centre
3 Despite his opposition the Centre took away levying the Sales Tax from the provinces

4 He demanded for a share the provinces in the income tax but of no avail
5 He opposed the levy of a cess by the Central Government on certain cloth
6 His Government wanted to start a Commercial bank but the Centre rejected this demand
7 He and his colleagues in the State Government opposed Centre s decision to take the control of Chittagong area
8 He protested against Centre s proposal to control the tea gardens, mining oil and the jute trade
9 He criticised the Central Government in his budget speech of 1949 1950

(cf D N Bannerjee *East Pakistan* op cit page 48)

5 *Constituent Assembly of Pakistan Debates* II No 1 (February 24 1948) pp 6 7
6 *A History of Pakistan* op cit page 124
7 Tariq Ali *Pakistan Military Rule or People s Power* (Jonathan Cape London 1970) page 48
8 Col Mohammad Ahmed *My Chief* (Lahore 1960) p 7 (italics are mine)
9 Pakistan Day Supplement ' *Pakistan Observer* August 15 1966
10 Mushtaq Ahmad *Government and Politics in Pakistan* (2nd edition Karachi 1963) page 7 (Italics are mine)
11 *The Pakistan Times* December 2 1953
12. D N Banerjee *East Pakistan* op cit page 47
13 Henry Frank Goodnow *The Civil Service of Pakistan* (New Haven and London Press 1964) Page 43
14 *A History of Pakistan* op cit page 132
15 Tariq Ali *Pakistan* op cit page 54
16 *Ibid*
17 *A History of Pakistan* op cit page 144 *People s Age* August 15 and September 5 1948
18 Cf statements made by J N Badhra Niren Dev and Purendra Sen Gupta members of the East Bengal Assembly in November 1949 (*The Pakistan Times* November 20 1949)
19 Tariq Ali op cit page 48 Also see Keith Callard *Pakistan A Political Study* (Macmillan New York 1957) page 181 Karl Von Vorys *Political Development of Pakistan* (Princeton 1965) page 90
20 Ian Stephens *Pakistan Old Country New Nation* (Pelican 1964) page 288
21 Keith Callard op cit page 182.
22. Tariq Ali op cit page 50

was built up steadily The situation took a serious turn on February 20 1952 when Nurul Amin s Government issued a prohibitory order against holding a proce sion in Dacca The Student s Federation defied it the next day and organised a big *demonstration The police resorted to firing* Twenty-six students and peasants were killed and four hundred were injured The blood that flowed that day for Bengali language and culture was Muslim blood Jabbar Raffiuddin Salam and Barkat and twenty two other young Bengali Muslims passed into the legends of East Bengal The occasion is anually remembered as Martyrs Day [8]

This tragic incident forced the Muslim League Govern ment of East Bengal to press the demand for recognition of Bengali as one of the State languages of Pakistan The Centre had to yield this time It was forced to withdraw *its proposals* [9] *However when the demand to give equal* status to the Bengali language in the C ntre was pressed in Parliament the Muslim League members kept quiet and no *decision was taken* [10]

Even this partial success of this movement gave encou ragement to the opposition Muslim parties to prepare the masses for another struggle In September 1952 the Youth League and the Communist Party issued a call for a united front against the government consisting of all opposition parties In an open letter to Khwaja Nazimuddin Fazlul Haq demanded early elections in East Bengal He said In case the government shows indications of shelving the elections we have to start a country wide agitation to force the elections [11]

The opposition now knew that the position of the Muslim League was precarious in East Bengal The elections to the District Council of Dacca in March 1950 when the ruling party lost 50 *percen of the Muslim seat already showed* how dangerous an encoun er wi h the electorate was To avoid elections to the Provincial Assembly in 1951 Chief Minister Nurul Amin ecured a decision from the Assembly that the term of the existing Assembly was to be reckoned

not from the day of its election in 1946 but from March 1948 when it met for the first time after Partition In March 1953 its term was extended for another year

To strengthen their position the leaders of the Muslim League started a campaign that since provincialism endangered the unity and existence of Pakistan it had to be eradicated The Government intensified its repressive measures against the opposition parties Large scale arrests of peasant workers followed Their offices were raided Prominent leaders belonging to these organisations were incarcerated A number of these leaders being non Muslims the leaders of the ruling party charged Hindus with fomenting subversion in India s favour By the end of 1949 and early in 1950 anti Hindu incitement was so widespread that Hindus had to move to India *en masse* This migration from East Bengal was far greater in dimensions than that which took place after the partition of the province in 1947 [12] The propaganda campaign accusing the opposition of playing into the hands of Hindu India continued unabated. However in order to win the popular support, Muslim League leaders in East Bengal tried to play the new role of having become the champions of Bengalis cause For instance Nurul Amin in a speech delivered in the Provincial Assembly in 1949 urged that the fight against discrimination should be continued until the demands of the Province were met [13] Another leader Nur Ahmad charged West Pakistani leaders with conspiring to turn East Bengal into a colony of West Pakistan [14]

It may be recalled that Khwaja Nazimuddin got himself elected as President of the Pakistan Muslim League immediately after the murder of Liaquat Ali Khan As the danger to his political career grew he convened in Dacca a meeting of the Muslim League Council on October 12, 1952 Despite opposition from the Punjab he got the League s Constitution amended to provide parity of representation in the Council for East and West The Punjabi leaders and Press criticised the decision

because they apprehended Bengali domination Z A Suleri, a prominent Punjabi journalist charged Nazimuddin with spreading provincial outlook [15] In his words "The Dacca decision incensed the Punjabis at what was to be interpreted as a calculated Bengali move to dominate the party structure.' [16] Another Punjabi journalist warned that Punjab would not tolerate Bengali domination over the organisation [17]

It was obvious that in any democratic structure based on adult franchise the Punjab would lose its dominating position The Punjabi leaders knew that Bengali Muslim Leaguers had aligned themselves with the Sindhis and the Pathans who too were opposed to the growing Punjabi bossism In order to defeat the very purpose of parity between the two wings the Chief Minister of Punjab Mumtaz Daultana proposed the formation of a unitary State

While the Punjabi leaders were criticising the amended constitution of the Muslim League which enabled Bengalis to dominate the organisation the report of the Basic Principles Committee of the Constituent Assembly published on December 22 1952 added fuel to the fire of indignation in the Punjab The Committee envisaged parity of seats between the East and the West in the two Houses of Parliament As the Bengalis had already won over representatives of the N W P F and Sind the plan meant for all practical purposes *Punjab s subservance to Bengal* The Basic Principles Committee had envisaged creation of two more provinces *viz* Karachi and Khairpur This would have further reduced Punjab s share in Parliament [18] Z A Suleri and other Punjabi journalists understandably attacked these proposals *Nazimuddin was accused of conspiring to* enslave the Punjab Tension mounted to such an extent that Suleri was arrested on the charge of sedition The Governor General took active part in this controversy In a broadcast to East Bengal he deplored separatist tendencies and *said that distance can never stand between hearts that*

eat as one [19] Nurul Amin retorted Division has begun o appear amongst us [20]

The Punjabi opponents of Nazimuddin were now determined to topple his Government It is said the Chief Minister f the Punjab Mumtaz Daultana incited the *ulemas* and the Ahrars [21] These elements launched *Khatam i-Nabuwat* [2] the Last Prophacy movement throughout the Punjab and Karachi demanding expulsion of ali Ahmedis from the Government declaring them as non Muslims The leaders of this movement dubbed Foreign Minister Zafarullah Khan as a traitor o Islam They were of the view that as the Ahmediya was a sect patronised by the British and the Ahmedis had celebrated British victory against Turkey in the first World War no Ahmediya including Zafarullah could be trusted It was further said that the Prime Minister being himself British title holder and always loyal to the British was shielding Zafarullah

As Nazimundin remained adamant direct action was launched on March 2 1953 Almost all the anti British and anti-Nazimuddin elements including leaders of the Jamait-e-Islam and veteran journalist like Maulana Akhtar Ali Khan of *Zamindar* and Shorash Kashmiri joined the movement

Ahmedis were openly accused of promoting the interests of British imperialism and of spreading heritical ideas opposed to the fundamental principles of Islam It is suspected that the American interests also played a prominent role in this game because at the time the U S A was trying to eliminate pro British elements from the Government and replace them with more amenable politicians.[23] Later Khwaja Nazimuddin declared that the anti-Ahmediya agitation was a political movement actuated by power-politics [24]

It is interesting to note that the leaders of this movement were anxious to get Indian help The Ahrar leader Sheikh Hissamuddin came to India during the last week of February 1953 He stayed with his friend Major-General Shah Nawaz Khan then Deputy Minister for Railways He came to see

me at my office He told me that Prime Minister Nehru had refused to help him as the Government of India did not like to interfere in the internal affairs of Pakistan He told me

> We are confident of our success We are in a position to carry on the proposed violent rebellion for at least three months

He was sitting in my office when a Reuter flash revealed that all members of the War Council of the Khatam e Nabuwat movement had been arrested in Karachi Despite my request that he should not proceed to Lahore the Sheikh left for his country The next day he was arrested while crossing the border

The agitation turned into a popular revolt in the Punjab and Karachi Mass anti government hartals were held in Lahore Rawalpindi Multan Sialkot Gujranwala Lyallpur and Karachi Demonstrators raided Government buildings obstructed postal and telegraph services damaged railway tracks stopped trains and buses posted pickets and destroyed and plundered shops warehouses and offices owned by Ahemadis [b] The situation in Lahore was especially tense The War Council announced the establishment of what is called Independent and Sovereign Islamic State of Pakistan with its headquarters in the historic mosque of Kashmiri Bazar Maulana Kausar Niazi of Jamait e Islami proclaimed himself as the Head of this Government A powerful radio trans mitter was installed in one of the minarettes of the mosque [25] While the Chief Minister of Punjab Mumtaz Daultana came out to support the principal demands of the leaders of this movement Khwaja Nazimudin ordered the Army to move in Martial law was proclaimed in Lahore The Army headed by Lieut General Azam Khan entered the Kashmiri Bazar mosque A number of people were killed Kausar Niazi managed to escape in the guise of a woman but was arrested at Raiwind The Governor General dismissed Daultana and in his place Malik Sir Feroze Khan Noon was appointed the new Chief Minister of the Punjab

Although Khwaja Nazimuddin succeeded in crushing the movement his political opponents hatched new plans to force him out of his seat. The country was passing through a serious economic crisis Food prices were shooting up and there was great resentment among the masses Nazimuddin made desperate efforts to overcome the difficulties He announced a new trade policy providing for greater imports of machinery to develop national industries banned grain exports by private persons and established price controls[27] He called for the Army s help to increase food production.

During the second week of April 1953 an American delegation visited Karachi With it came Pakistan s Ambassador in Washington Mohammad Ali Bogra A dramatic sequence followed On April 17 1953 Nazimuddin started on an election tour Muslim League Guards presented him a guard of honour at the V I P Platform Karachi Nazimuddin was about to board the train when a messenger from Govesnor General Ghulam Mohammad rushed to him and handed him a sealed envelope Its contents shocked Nazimuddin It was an order of dismissal The Punjabi Governor General had sacked the Prime Minister and his Cabinet on the ground that it had proved entirely inadequate to grapple with the difficulties facing the country[28] Nazimuddin cancelled the tour tried to appeal to the Queen but found his telephone connection cut off In the meantime the Governor-General had appointed Nazimuddin s Bengali opponent Mohammad Ali Bogra was the new Prime Minister of Pakistan

Nazimuddin was also forced to resign from the Presidentship of the Muslim League The League Council approved the Governor General s action and elected him its President The Muslim League Parliamentary Party followed suit and elected him its leader[30]

NOTES

1 *A History of Pakistan* op cit pag 18
2. *Ibid*
3 *Munir Report* p 18.
4 *Constituent Assembly of Pakistan Debates* V No. 3 (March 9 1949) P 45
5 Z A Suleri *Pakistan s Lost Years* (Lahore) pag 37
6 *A History of Pakistan* op cit pag 153
7 *Ibid* pag 151
8 D Prasad *Bangla Desh versus Pakistan* op cit pag 17
9 *Dawn Karachi* February 23 1952 Tariq Ali *Pakistan* op cit pag 50
10 *A History of Pakistan* op cit pag 191
11 *Pakistan Times* September 17 1952
12 *Crossroads* March 17 1950
13 *The Hindustan Standard* March 20 1949 At that time Nurul Amin was a member of the Muslim League Legislature Party
14 K Callard *Pakistan* op cit p 39
15 Suleri Z A *Pakistan s Lost Years* op cit p 39
16 *Ibid* pag 46
17 Maulana Akhtar Khan in the *Daily Zaminda* Lahore Novem 13 1952
18 Khalid B Sayeed op cit pp 66 67
19 *The Pakistan Times* November 27 1952
20 *Ibid* December 17 1952
21 Ahrars were nationalist Muslims who opposed the Muslim League before the Partition They were led by very powerful orators like Attaullah Shah Bukhari Hissamuddin Afzal Huq Mazhar Ali and Shorash Kashmiri
22 It means the movement to recognise that Mohammad was the last Prophet Ahmedis were accused of flouting this belief
23 The trial revealed that Jamait-e Islami was financed by U S agents Witnesses refused to give their name publicly fearing international complications (cf *A History of Pakistan* op cit Page 184)
24 *Chronology of Pakistan* pp 94 95
25 *The Pakistan Times* March 3 4 5 6 7 10 1953
26 *Political Conspiracies in Pakistan* op cit page 218
27 *The Pakistan Times* March 6 1953
28 *The Morning News* Dacca March 19 1953
29 *Political Conspiracies in Pakistan* op cit page 248-49
30 *The Pakistan Times* April 18 1953

Chapter VII

Upsurge of Bengali Nationalism
Dismissal of Huq and Bogra

There was never any doubt about the political leanings of the new Prime Minister Mohammod Ali Bogra He was pro American He was brought to power to align his country to the American bloc The Punjabi Governor-General and the Pathan Commander in-Chief were equally determined to strengthen the Army with American help [1] Pro British Foreign Minister Zafarullah Khan was retained in the new Cabinet to maintain old links with the British who also wanted Pakistan to join the proposed anti-Communist military bloc of Muslim nations Thus Pakistan signed the Mutual Assistance Agreement with the United States in May 1954 joined the South East Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) in September 1954, and the Baghdad Pact in 1955 [2]

While the dismissal of the Nazimuddin Cabinet brought about a clear change in the foreign policy of Pakistan it enabled the bureaucracy dominated by the West Pakistanis to become the most powerful factor in the political life of the country The Head of the State was a former Secretary to the Government of United India The Defence Secretary Iskander Mirza, who advised Nazimuddin to use Army

against the agitators primarily belonged to the Political Department of the British Indian Government It was he who persuaded the Prime Minister to extend the tenure of Ayub Khan The latter secured America s goodwill It is claimed that the Americans had no good opinion regarding the competence of Paki tani political leaders and therefore welcomed having the Pakistan army on their side [3] Emergence of these powerful individuals on the political scene helped the bureaucracy to take full advantage of the pediatory fight among politicians to eliminate them and usurp power to itself Under bureaucratic rule democratic traditions and law and constitution have little relevance This is evident from the fact that the above mentioned treaties were never debated in Parliament Prime Minister Bogra was a puppet in the hands of the bureaucrats and there was no question of his being able to give justice to Bengal

In East Pakistan the exi of Nazimuddin had gone un wept because the Muslim League had lost the confidence of the Bengali Muslims due to its failure to solve the problems that faced East Bengal The question of language remained unsolved Nurul Amin s government had to face acute political crises Its authority by the beginning of 1954 was completely undermined This was for a number of reasons

The Bengalis were deprived of their due share in the services Almost all the senior positions and the bulk of the other posts were occupied by West Pakistanis chiefly Punjabis Discrimination against the Bengalis prevailed even in the Army that was dominated by the Punjabis and the Pathans Bengalis serving in private enterprises owned by businessmen from West Pakistan usually received a salary which was half to one third of the salary paid to their Punjabi colleagues

As the Government in East Bengal was dominated by big landlords and reactionary elements and was guided by West Pakistani bureaucrats agrarian problems remained unsolved As a result of this East Bengal suffered from a chronic deficiency of food stuffs As a result of the poor harvest of

1952 53 this deficiency developed into a famine Moreover after a short lived boom brought about by the Korean War, a sharp drop in the prices of agricultural raw materials took place in 1953 54 A shortage of industrial commodities was further caused by the rupture of traditional economic links with India [4] Export of jute to India was virtually banned Ban on the import of Indian cloth was meant to help the Western countries to sell their products on comparatively higher prices which resulted in an increase in the cost of living index The situation was further worsened by West Pakistani industrialists determined to indulge in speculation and black-marketing All this naturally meant deterioration in the condition of the poor especially peasants and workers [5] Bengali weavers had to suffer because of the Government s import policy Weavers were forced to purchase yarn and dyestuff in the black market with the result that they had to pay 25 50 percent more than West Pakistanis who owned weaving mills and had been granted quotas of other materials including dyestuff As a result production of hand woven cloth decreased by more than twenty percent and a large number of craftsmen were literally led to their ruin

The Central Government discriminated in economic and financial matters against East Bengal because it adopted a policy which was intended to develop first and foremost the Western Wing Between 1948 and 1953 East Bengal had shown a favourable foreign-trade balance which amounted to 2 900 million rupees [7] but this surplus was used to offset the unfavourable trade balance of West Pakistan which exported less than East Bengal but absorbed no less than 70 percent of the total imports of Pakistan each year The foreign exchange earning of East Bengal thus was used up for the industrial development of Pakistan At least 300 million rupees were annually extracted from East Bengal and expended to develop the Western regions especially the Punjab and Karachi [8] East Bengal suffered heavily in its trade with West Pakistan Between 1948 and 1953, East

Bengal's unfavourable trade balance in regard to this aspect was 909 million rupees.

West Pakistani advisers forced the Central Government to adopt foreign and regional trade policies that were aimed at developing the Western Wing economy at the cost of East Bengal. Between 1948 and 1951 the Central Government earmarked Rs 1130 million for financing development projects. Out of this sum East Bengal was allocated only Rs 250 million while the rest was allocated for West Pakistan.[9] During the same period West Pakistan received 79.6 percent of the total allocations for agricultural development. Between 1948 and 1953 East Bengal got Central loans to the extent of Rs 164,100,000 against Rs 277,700,000 allocated for West Pakistan. But while more than 83 per cent of this sum was used in West Pakistan only 49.9 per cent of the allocated sum was used in East Bengal. It may be pointed out that even out of the total allocations meant for West Pakistan the Punjab and Karachi got the lion's share.

East Bengal remained a backward agricultural area. It became a source of raw material and foreign currency for the Punjab and Karachi where big industries were set up. Western industrialists were thus able to turn East Bengal into their colony and a market where the industrial commodities produced by them were sold.[10] West Pakistani elements also occupied key positions in the commercial and financial spheres where they controlled not only East Bengal's import trade but also its economic relations with the Western Wing.[11] These industrials is appointed West Pakistani distributors agents and salesmen to sell their goods in East Bengal thus denying the benefit of these channels of trade to the Bengalis. With big financial resources at their disposal and with official patronage they entered into competition with the Bengalis who suffered heavily. As the atmosphere was surcharged with communalism the Hindu capitalists and landlords hesitated to invest money in new enterprises

A large number of them sold their factories and lands to the Punjabis or transferred their capital to India

The Muslim League regime at the Centre as well as in Dacca failed to safeguard the interests of Bengal Thus the opposition parties headed by Bhashani Suhrawardy and Fazlul Huq came into the forefront to fight against the discredited leadership In July 1953 Fazlul Huq resigned from the post of Advocate-General of East Bengal He formed a new political organisation namely the Krishak Sramik Party[12] Many old stalwarts like Azizul Huq Yusuf Ali Chaudhury and Abu Hasan Sarkar joined hands with Fazlul Huq It was a non communal organisation which claimed for its aims the achievements of full autonomy for East Bengal as well as other provinces thus reconstituting Pakistan in accordance with the principles of the Lahore Resolution of 1940[13] It also advocated civil liberties and unconditional release of all political prisoners The first conference of this party was held in Dacca on July 26 Fazlul Huq was elected President and he was empowered to nominate members of the working committee Its 12 point programme was announced on July 29 1953 The main demands were full autonomy for East Bengal recognition of Bengali as one of the State languages of Pakistan and separation of the judiciary from the executive[14] Some other points related to the national planning of labour improvement of agricultural methods industrialisation of the country and the derence of the rights of the minorities[15]

In the meantime in December 1952 the Awami Muslim League under the leadership of Suhrawardy held a convention at which a manifesto was adopted containing an exposition of the party s programme It demanded complete regional autonomy One of the other main demands was that Bengali should be declared a State language of Pakistan

The Youth League together with the Communist Party issued a call to the East Bengali political parties to form a united front against the discredited Muslim League Government The chief demands of the Front comprised equality

between the two Wings and complete autonomy for East Bengal in all matters except defence foreign policy and currency [154] It also demanded that discrimination against Bengalis in the armed forces should cease that the naval headquarters be transferred to East Bengal that surplus land be handed over to the landless peasants that the various so called Safety Acts which allowed for imprisonment without trial be scrapped and all political prisoners released [156]

The United Front comprised the Krishak Sramik Party the Awami Muslim League the Nizam e Islami Party the Scheduled Castes Federation Pakistan National Congress the Communist Party and the Gantantri Dal

The Constitutional proposals that the new Prime Minister Mohammad Ali Bogra announced in the Constituent Assembly during October 1953 envisaged that the Upper House would consist of an equal number of representatives from each of the five units The Lower House would be composed on the basis of population of each of the five units It was further proposed that in a joint sitting each of the two Wings would have equal representation In order to please the Punjabis it was proposed that in such a joint sitting the majority vote must include at least 30 per cent of the total members belonging to each Wing These provisions were included to satisfy the Punjabis who feared Bengali domination in Parliament Although all the Chief Ministers approved these proposals the opposition parties in Bengal rejected them They were of the view that Bengalis who were in majority in the country as a whole were deprived of their democratic rights

It may be recalled that although the Nazimuddin group lost its prestige in East Bengal it was still a powerfull faction in the Constituent Assembly The new Prime Minister failed to secure co operation from this group with the result that the bureaucrat rulers of Karachi who supported the puppet Prime Minister decided to hold election Anyhow for one excuse or another the Government had been postponing provincial elections since the Partition I was unwilling to

subversive elements within and from outside the country were responsible for these riots[23a] He said these elements had hatched a foul conspiracy agains the industrial progress of East Bengal[24] The Chief Minister rejected this allegation as being fantastic Awami League's journal *Ittefaq* stated that the trouble was deliberately organised by vested interests to discredit the popular government of East Bengal

Fazlul Huq's government rejected the Central Government's order to ban leftist parties Instead it threatened to proceed with the enquiries into the charges of corruption raised against the Muslim League leaders in East Bengal Fazlul Huq and his colleagues were summoned to Karachi While passing through Calcutta on way to Karachi the Chief Minister was approached by Indian and foreign journalists at the Dum Dum airport He was swayed by sentiment and said that although India was divided in 1947 hearts of Bengalis on both sides of the borders were not divided West Pakistani journalists and Muslim League leaders started accusing him of dancing to the tune of Indians Fazlul Huq and his colleagues assured the Governor General that they were loyal to their country Before leaving Karachi for Dacca they issued a joint statement It said

> A great deal of misunderstanding has been created against the United Front Ministry of East Bengal in the West Pakistan press and public opinion We want to make it clear once for all that we are true Pakistanis and stand for the unity and strength of Pakistan East Bengal and West Pakistan are integral parts of one component whole and it is one and indivisible and nothing shall part us We are for the autonomy of provinces and not for their independence[25]

The Central Government paid no attention to these refutations Fazlul Huq's Ministary was dissmised and the Provincial Assembly dissolved[26] The Governor General issued a proclamation imposing Governor's rule on the ground of threatened security of East Bengal where the government could not be carried on in accordance with the pro-

visions of law The Defence Secretary of the Central Government Major General Iskander Mirza came to East Bengal as the Loughes Governor He was sworn in on the day the popular Ministry was dissolved Fazlul Huq was put under house arrest Sheikh Mujibur Rehman was also arrested on the same day

Prime Minister Mohammed Ali Bogra called Fazlul Huq a traitor in his radio broadcast to the nation on the same day This is what he said

> I have no doubt that their (people of Pakistan) verdict will be that Mr Fazlul Huq is traitor to Pakistan I should say that he is a traitor even to East Bengal because no man in his senses could imagine that an independent Bengal would last even as long as Hyderabad did Mr Fazlul Huq s pronouncements regarding the independence of East Bengal viewed against his previous statements on this subject in Calcutta convinced my colleagus and myself that in Fazlul Huq we were dealing with a Provincial Chief Minister whose Government would not take the administrative measures that any responsible Government would take but with a political leader who was fundamentally disloyal to Pakistan."[27]

This was the testimonial to the person who had moved the historic Pakistan Resolution only fourteen years earlier

The new Governor-General, Major General Iskander Mirza threatened to shoot him He even denounced democracy and propounded his own theory of what he called the Guided Democracy Sensing great danger to his own career Suhrawardy left the country for medical treatment" to Zurich

Iskander Mirza banned the Communist Party Special police commission were set up whose purpose was the discovery and subsequent dismissal of persons employed in industrial enterprises who were either communists or in sympathy with communistic ideas Factory owners were warned that they would be held responsible if communists were either recruited or not dismissed.[28] This was used

as an excuse to dismiss many non communist militants in the factories More than two thousand persons including thirteen members of the Bengal Assembly were arrested and interned on charge of anti state activities The premises of the United Front were sealed strict censorship was introduced and demonstrations were banned and even groups of five or more were not permitted together in the streets Prime Minister Mohammed Ali Bogra in a broadcast said One thing is certain—the centre will never allow this province to again incur the danger of disintegration [29]

The national movement in East Bengal was thus hard hit by the repressions of 1954 However the Nazimuddin group in the Constituent Assembly was still very strong and posed a danger to the aspirations of the Punjabi politicians and bureaucrats including Governor General Ghulam Mohammed Bengali members of the Constituent Assembly joined hands with the Prime Minister to weaken the position of the Governor General who was a source of strength to the Punjabis The latter were apprehensive that even under the party system the Bengalis might exploit the differences among the provinces in West Pakistan. They proposed

while the Punjabi members whiled away their time in having tea in the room of Chaudhuri Mohammed Ali [31]

Prime Minister Mohammed Ali Bogra won the first round in his battle against the Governor General on September 20 1954 when the Constituent Assembly repealed the Public and Representative Offices (Disqualification) Act by an overwhelming majority The Governor General and his Punjabi supporters were alarmed over this development. The Punjabi Press demanded dismissal of the Prime Minister The Prime Minister knew that the Governor-General had started thinking of taking such a step On September 21 1954 when he was conferring with his advisers in Abbotabad the Constituent Assembly passed an amendment to the Government of India Act to deprive the Governor General of his powers to dismiss the ministry which enjoyed the confidence of the House [33] According to this Act only members of the Constituent Assembly could remove any Cabinet member by passing a vote of no-confidence against him. Moreover it stipulated that the Prime Minister or other Cabinet ministers could be appointed by the Governor-General only if they were members of the Assembly According to the same amendment the Government was to be responsible to the Assembly and the Governor General was required to exercise his powers only in accordance with the advice of the Cabinet [34]

The situation arising out of these measures was alarming to the Punjabi politicians Now the Governor-General could not dismiss any member to reduce the Bengali majority in the Assembly The Governor of East Bengal The Iskander Mirza who was preparing to start legal proceedings under PRODA against many Bengali members of the Constituent Assembly was rendered helpless The Governor General could not now blackmail any provincial ministry into acting according to his own dictates

Describing this event Ayub Khan stated that Mohammed Ali Bogra started as a protege of Ghulam Mohammed As he acquired confidence he thought, he should disengage himself

from the apronstrings of the Governor General A Resolution (depriving the Governor General of his extraordinary powers) was printed in the middle of the night and placed in the pigeonhole of the members of the Assembly In the morning *the Assembly met as a Constitution making body an hour* before its scheduled time and revoked Sections 9 10 10A 10B and 17 of the Government of India Act thus stripping the Governor General of the powers in exercise of which he had dismissed the Nazimuddin Cabinet The Resolution was *moved and passed within ten minutes* [35]

The Governor General says Ayub Khan was not the kind of man to take things lying down He could fight any body and stand upto anyone He was a sick man at that time and his speech was quite unintelligible He must have said to himself All right if this is how you have treated me I shall pay you back in the same coin [36] Similarly his associates were not prepared to give way

Although the Bengalis won the first round it was only a short term gain The Governor General called his bureaucrat advisers to Abbotabad and made up his mind to dissolve the Constituent Assembly He was even prepared to proclaim military rule In the meantime the Prime Minister went to the United States along with Zafarullah Khan Chaudhuri Mohammed Ali and Commander in Chief Ayub Khan to negotiate American economic and military help for Pakistan *The Governor General sent an urgent message to* the Prime Minister asking him to return to Karachi immediately It was clear that the old man was on the war-path and was going to dismiss the Prime Minister The latter was also worried When the party reached London there was a call for Ayub Khan from the Governor General He wanted him to get back to Pakistan at once He was *not interested in the others* The Prime Minister was worried about *what might happen to him on his return* [3] He kept asking Ayub Khan Can you guarantee that I will not be put under arrest when I get back? The Prime Minister even requested that he should be provided with army

protection on arrival at Karachi On the advice of the Commander-in Chief the Prime Minister went straight to his residence while Ayub Khan Iskander Mirza and Chaudhuri Mohammed Ali went to the Governor General s house Ghulam Mohammed was bursting with rage emitting volleys or abu es Chaudhuri Mohammed Ali ventured to say something and received a volley then Iskander Mirza said something and got another [38]

The Governor-General was determined to dismiss the Cabinet and appoint Ayub Khan in his place as a military dictator [39] The latter is said to have opposed this move He persuaded the Prime Minister to meet the Governor General The Prime Minister agreed to act according to the Governor-General s wishes He found him helpless because in the meantime the Governor General had through his emissaries contacted Suhrawardy in Switzerland The latter agreed to support dissolution of the Constituent Assembly in exchange for the United Front s representation in the Central Cabinet and restoration of parliamentary democracy in East Bengal Thus it was clear that being assailed by the Nazimuddin group the Governor General sought an ally in Suhrawardy and his colleagues in East Bengal They responded positively to such a gesture [40] In order to save his own skin the Prime Minister agreed to advise the Governor General to take such a step He also agreed to reconstitute his Cabinet Accordingly the Governor General dissolved the Constituent Assembly on October 24 1954 [41]

Ayub Khan joined the Cabinet as Minister of Defence and Iskander Mirza as Minister of Home Affairs The Ministry of Finance remained in the hands of Chaudhury Mohammed Ali an ardent follower of Jamaat Islami M A H Ispahani, a leading businessman of Bengal was appointed Minister of Commerce and Industry Later on Suhrawardy joined the Government as Law Minister in December, 1954 It may be recalled that Suhrawardy had helped the Governor-General to contest the *Tamizuddin s* case [42] His nomination on the Central Cabinet posed a threat to the

Prime Minister who joined hands with *Fazlul Huq and his* United Front It was designed to weaken Suhrawardy and his Awami League

On June 5 1955 Governor s rule in East Bengal was revoked Fazlul Huq s nominee in the Cen ral Cabinet Abu Hussain Sarkar resigned from the Cabinet to head a coalition Government in East Bengal

Mohammed Ali Bogra s new Cabinet was in fact the Governor General s Council of Advi ers It was dominated *by Iskander Mirza Ayub Khan and Chaudhuri* Moham med Ali Thus the real power was in the hands of bureaucrats and former officials *They hated politicians and* people alike Iskander Mirza who had served the Political Department of the British Government of United India as pired to become dictator He hinted this in an interview with the correspondent of the London *Times* (October 30 1954) He said

> Some undeveloped countries have to learn democracy and until they *do so they have to be controlled* With so many illiterate people politicians could make a *mess of things There was nothing undemocratic* in dec laring the state of emergency because 95 per cent of the people welcomed it

Ayub Khan supported these views He had already pre pared a plan to introduce the conception of guided democracy He advocated the establishment of one unit of West Pakistan and arming the head of the State with extra ordinary powers [43] *His plan envisaged the establishment of* a federal structure consisting of two provincial governments *for the two wings* and a Parliament for the Centre

Former Chief Minister of Punjab Mian Mumtaz Daul tana supported the establishment of one unit of West Pakistan The views expressed in his draft document were mischievous and were undoubtedly the views of the Govern ment and must have been written down by him after con sultation with those interested in the one unit scheme [44]

The document referred to the fact that West Pakistan in its confrontation with East Bengal should speak as one entity because the politicians of East Bengal had often resorted to the small brothers big brothers role of West distrup ion [45]

Daultana knew that political leaders of Sind and NWFP were opposed to this scheme In order to overcome this difficulty he suggested adoption of coercive methods Thus he recommended

> The first necessity of the present context therefore is that we must clear the decks before we launch our political campaign In other words we must silence and render inoperative all opposition of which we are morally convinced that it is motivated by evil [46]

Daultana recommended the dismissal of the Chief Ministers of Sind and Punjab and unreserved support to Sardar Abdul Rashid Chief Minister of N W F P stilling his suspicions and no compromise with the Pakhtun leader Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan In order to win the support of all sections of people Daultana urged that a propaganda campaign should be organised with the help of prominent leaders and journalists He also urged that *mullahs* should be engaged to conduct this propaganda campaign

That Daultana aimed at Punjabi domination is proved by the fact that he advised Punjabis in these words

> At present we do not require too much noise in the Punjab It will put other people s back up and cause suspicion At a later stage Punjab will have to take the lead At that time I hope an effective intelligent Punjab leadership will have been put both at the Centre and at Lahore [47]

He was of view that after consolidating the Punjab s position in West Pakistan some kind of political bargaining should be made with Suhrawardy on the basis of a four-subject Centre two provinces federal parity complete provincial and cultural autonomy [48]

Undoubtedly it was a clever plan to enslave West Pakistan in the first instance and then to install a puppet Government in the Centre Daultana knew that any such Government would remain at the mercy of the Punjabi-dominated army

The army leaders and the bureaucrats were determined to force their will on unwilling provincial governments The Sind Assembly rejected the One Unit Scheme with an overwhelming majority [59] The Chief Minister of Sind was dismissed and was replaced by Mohammed Ayub Khuhro The same Assembly reversed its decision and passed a resolution approving the One Unit Scheme by 100 votes to 4 [60] On March 27 1955 the Governor General issued an ordinance to invest himself with the power to establish the Province of West Pakistan He made it clear that he had assumed power to provide a Constitution for the entire country [61]

It may be recalled that the Speaker of the dissolved Constituent Assembly had challenged the right of the Governor-General to dissolve the Assembly The Sind High Court upheld his plea and declared the action of the Governor General illegal The Governor General appealed to the Federal Court which upheld the action of the Governor-General However the Court declared that the Act which allowed the issuance of such writs (against the actions of the Governor General) was illegal because the Governor General had not given assent to it Naturally this meant that a number of other Acts which had not received the assent of the Governor General were also illegal The Governor General in his ordinance of March 27 1955 declared that he was validating all Acts invalidated by the ruling of the Court The validity of the new ordinance was also challenged in the Federal Court The Court raised its voice in defence of the constitutional government It said

> The Governor General can give or withhold his assent to the legislation of the Assembly but he himself is not the Constituent Assembly and on its disappearance he can

neither claim powers which he never possessed nor claim to succeed to the powers of that assembly It might have been expected that conformably with the attitude taken before us by the responsible counsel for the Crown the first concern of the Government would have been to bring into existence another representative body to exercise the powers of the Constituent Assembly so that all invalid legislation could have been validated by the new body Such a course would have been consistent with constitutional practice in relation to such a situation as has arisen Events however show that other counsels have since prevailed The Ordinance contains no reference to elections and all the learned Advocate-General can say is that they are intended to be held'[5]

It was suspected that the Governor-General wanted to establish a dictatorship but General Ayub Khan refused to oblige him In fact he had not been able to consolidate his position in the Army Iskander Mirza was still a force to reckon with He had his own supporters in the Army Both were waiting for a suitable opportunity to seize power

The Governor General was left with no other option than to follow the ruling of the Federal Court and hold elections to the Constituent Assembly Parliamentary rule was restored in East Bengal so that the elections of members of the Constituent Assembly could be held

The Muslim League suffered a crushing defeat in these elections Only one candidate of the Muslim League in East Bengal—Mohammed Ali Bogra—was elected Half the members of his Government lost their seats The United Front managed to get 16 of its members into the Constituent Assembly and the Awami League 13 Out of 80 seats in the Assembly the Muslim League got only 25 while it had 64 members in the previous Assembly Prime Minister Bogra was persuaded to form a coalition Government with the help of the Awami League The United Front refused to support the Government

Iskander Mirza was preparing the ground to usurp political power On the other hand Ghulam Mohammed supported Suhrawardy The latter probably at the instance of the ailing Governor General instigated his Awami Party to demand the resignation of Bogra s Government and the creation of a coalition Government headed by him elf [13] However Iskander Mirza outmanoeuvred him He persuaded Ghulam Mohammed to proceed on sick leave to London and took over as Acting Governor General To provide a counterpoise to Suhrawardy he started cultivating Fazlul Huq despite the fact that only a year before he had condemned him as a traitor Bogra was forced to submit his resignation and was sent to Washington as Pakistan s Ambassador to the USA In his place Chaudhuri Mohammad Ali a Punjabi bureaucrat cum-politician was appointed the new Prime Minister Fazlul Huq and his group joined the Cabinet General Ayub Khan was ousted from this Cabinet because he was too inconvenient a personality for Mirza Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan s brother Dr Khan Sahib who had earlier been nominated on Bogra s Cabinet was elevated in status being the seniormost member of the Cabinet

On September 30 1955, the new Constituent Assembly legalised the integration of West Pakistan as one province The name of East Bengal was changed to East Pakistan in the new Constitution which Chaudhuri Mohammed Ali was able to produce

It is interesting to note that the step for the establishment of West Pakistan was drafted by Suhrawardy He had entered into an understanding with Punjabi politicians headed by M M Daultana This was a clear change of tactics because he knew that while non Punjabis in the Western Wing were opposed to this move it was better to join hands with Punjabi leaders to safeguard Bengali interests

In order to crush the opposition to this bill the Chief Ministers of Sind Punjab and NWFP were dismissed M A Gurmani a Punjabi politician was appointed Governor of West Pakistan while the former Chief Minister of NWFP

Dr Khan Sahib was made Chief Minister of the new province in the hope that this would weaken dissatisfaction among the Pathans The Chief Ministers of the former provinces—M A Khuhro (Sind) Sardar Bahadur Khan (NWFP) and Sardar Abdul Hamid Dasti (Punjab) were appointed Cabinet ministers M M Daultana was also included in the Cabinet The ruling group was compelled to honour the wishes of the Bengali national movement Bengali was declared Pakistan s official language at par with Urdu

In order to please fanatic mullahs Pakistan was proclaimed an Islamic Republic The Constitution accorded the Muslim nation a place of privilege vis a-vis the religious minorities None but a Muslim could be President A special committee by the President of the most prominent mullahs and ulemas was empowered to declare whether or not a law accorded with the injunctions of Islam

The new Constitution gave extraordinary powers to the President According to Article 37(3) of this Constitution the President could use his discretion in the appointment of the Prime Minister This meant that when no party commanded a clear majority in the National Assembly the President could appoint any yes man as his Prime Minister and it was not impossible for a person like Iskander Mirza to create a rift and to manipulate majority support to the man of his choice

The Constituent Assembly passed the new Constitution on February 29 1956 Suhrawardy his Awami members and non Muslim representatives pulled out on the final voting While Suhrawardy demanded the enforcement of the joint electorate system representatives from the Punjab excluding of course Mian Iftakharuddin supported the separate electorate system which meant that Hindus could vote only for Hindus and Muslims could elect only Muslims to the National Assembly Suhrawardy complained that the enforcement of the separate electorate system in East Bengal meant the creation of a rift among the Bengalis East Bengal was also not allowed the weight due to it by virtue of its population

Iskander Mirza's reign marked the beginning of a period of political uncertainty and intrigue. Almost all political parties and leaders played to his tune. While he succeeded in winning over the co-operation of Dr Khan Sahib whom he appointed the first Chief Minister of West Pakistan, it is interesting to find that the Muslim League leaders like Daultana and Sardar Bahadur Khan agreed to work under this anti-League leader. Later on Sardar Bahadur Khan was elected leader of the Muslim League Party which was in the majority in the West Pakistan Assembly. Sardar Bahadur demanded the dismissal of Dr Khan Sahib and pressed his own appointment as Chief Minister of the province. Governor Gurmani refused to oblige the Sardar. Dr Khan Sahib was asked to form a new ministry. This brought about a split in the Muslim League Party. The defectors joined Dr Khan Sahib who with the blessings of Iskander Mirza formed the Republican Party. In May 1956 the acting Speaker of the Assembly saved Dr Khan Sahib's ministry by casting his vote in favour of the ministerial candidate for the speakership. This drew more defectors from the Punjab Muslim Leaguer. The Republicans were thus free to work for Mirza who managed to denigrate and discredit all politi-

Chaudhury Mohammed Ali was left at the mercy of the Republican members in the National Assembly Now Mirza broke the bonds of friendship with Fazlul Huq s group The Sarkar Ministry had to resign on August 30 1956 with the result that Governor s rule was imposed in East Bengal and the Legislative Assembly dissolved [58]

The decree announcing the state of emergency however could neither relieve the tension caused by the general discontent nor still the hunger of the thousands of starving people in East Pakistan [59] The Awami League and its allies threatened to organise a civil disobedience movement On September 3 in Dacca the food marchers demanding rice at a fair price defied the prohibitory orders The police resorted to firing killing half a dozen people The Governor was compelled to give in to the demands of the opposition On September 4 1956 he invited Awami leader Ataur Rehman to form a Government [60] The state of emergency in East Pakistan was revoked on September 6 and a coalition Government was formed in which the key posts were in the hands of the Awami League The Gantantri Dal the United Progressive Party and the East Pakistan Awami Muslim League were represented in the new ministry

The Muslim League had lost its position in both the wings as well as in the Centre Most of its representatives in the National Assemby refused to extend co operation to Chaudhury Mohammed Ali with the result that the latter had to submit his resignation President Mirza now asked Suhrawardy to form a coalition Government It was a political bargain between Mirza and Suhrawardy While the latter assured Mirza that he would extend his support to Pakistan s membership of the Western military blocs Mirza forced Dr Khan Sahib to agree to the enforcement of the joint electorate system Thus Suhrawardy was able to thwart the West Pakistani game of creating division among the Bengalis on the religious basis [61] This was thus the first triumph of Bengali nationalism

However Suhrawardy's statement on the Baghdad Pact reiterating his Government's adherence to the Pact created a rift in the Awami League Maulana Bhashani condemned this statement He convened a meeting of the Council of East Pakistan Awami League at Kazmani in the Mymensingh district. The Council passed a resolution condemning Pakistan's foreign policy Suhrawardy and Ataur Rehman issued a statement that no such resolution was passed[62] Subsequently Maulana Bhashani resigned from the Presidentship of the Party[63] A number of his followers also left the party His Organising Secretary Ole Ahad published a party document condemning military pacts On May 30 Sheikh Mujibur Rehman resigned from the provincial ministry to devout himself to organise the party The Council of the Awami League again met on June 12 1957 While it curtailed the power of the President and suspended Ole Ahad it passed a resolution affirming faith in the leadership of Suhrawardy It is said that President Mirza sent out feelers to Maulana Bhashani to weaken Suhrawardy's position in East Bengal He was out to discredit Suhrawardy because the latter had joined hands with the Punjabi leadership to oust Mirza in the presidential election. In the meantime Bhashani had formed the National Awami Party Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan G M Syed and Mian Iftikharuddin and others from West Pakistan joined hands with Bhashani The aims of this party were to create a democratic state free of feudal and imperialistic fetters and of all feudal and imperialist features to carry out radical agrarian reforms to revoke the enforced unification of West Pakistan and grant full autonomy to the national regions of the country to hold democratic general elections to improve the living conditions of the working people to annul the military agreements signed by Pakistan and to pursue an independent neutral foreign policy[64]

In the meantime Dr Khan Sahib had lost the majority in the West Pakistan Assembly A number of his supporters from Sind and NWFP who never liked the formation

ment's foreign policy Suhrawardy's support to the Anglo Israeli aggression against Egypt evoked severe condemnation from the masses Opposition leaders considered Pakistan's military alliance as a new form of imperialist colonialism and demanded a thorough revision of the foreign policy and the adoption of an independent and natural course of action[70] Bhashani and his supporters demanded the radical agrarian reforms should be immediately carried out and the Jagirdari and Zamindari systems abolished without payment of compensation. It urged that steps should be taken to halt the ejection of tenants from the lands they tilled and to distribute newly irrigated lands to peasants[71] Suhrawardy's supporters had no arguments to rebut the charges levelled against them by Bhashani and his supporters They started a campaign of abuse and slander which culminated in their supporters using knives and batons to break up some of the Maulana's meetings One of the members of East Pakistan's Cabinet Mahmud Ali resigned in protest against this gangsterism[7] In September Press reports claimed that there was a plot to murder Maulana Bhashani

It is suspected that President Mirza by discrediting all politicians one by one was preparing the ground to establish his own dictatorship In order to secure the co operation of the Army he extended the tenure of the Commander-in Chief Ayub Khan by two years but by giving importance to Ayub Khan he ruined his own career Ayub Khan had by now started interfering in the affairs of the Government According to one of Ayub's lieutenants Ayub Khan got hold of Messrs Suhrawardy and Iskander Mirza and told them sternly and in definite terms in what may be called single and unorthodox language to behave[73]

When the majority of Republican members particularly those belonging to Sind and NWFP withdrew their support to Suhrawardy on the question of One Unit of West Pakistan Suhrawardy instead of depending upon the President to patch up his differences with the Republicans decided

to take a clear stand against the break up of One Unit He expected that Punjabi Muslim Leaguers like Daultana and the Republican leaders belonging to the Punjab would support him It was believed that he had assured Firoze Khan Noon that after the general elections he would support him for the President s post In order to get the majority support to his Cabinet he had offered cabinet posts to about six members of the opposition This aroused President Mirza s suspicions immediately Suhrawardy requested the President to summon the National Assembly so as to enable him to seek a vote of confidence As Suhrawardy was undermining the influence of the President s own party the President rejected his advice and asked Suhrawardy to resign at once or he would dismiss him Suhrawardy had to submit his resignation on October 11 1957 [74]

It goes to the credit of Suhrawardy that for the first time an attempt was made to allocate foreign exchange on a parity basis to East Pakistani traders and industrialists He decided to set up separate offices of the Controller of Imports and Exports for East Pakistan He announced that his Government would encourage Bengali traders His policies were criticised by West Pakistani traders.[75] Suhrawardy was supplanted by Chundrigar who in turn was ousted by an old Punjabi landlord Malik Sir Feroze Khan Noon in December 1957

In East Pakistan a serious crisis occurred on March 31 1958 when Fazlul Huq the Governor dismissed Ataur Rehman Khan s Awami Cabinet The same night the President dismissed Fazlul Huq The latter had appointed his own party s leader Abu Hassain Sarkar as the new Chief Minister The new Governor dismissed Sarkar within twelve hours of assuming office and re appointed Ataur Rehman as Chief Minister When Bhashani s group withdrew its support to the new Ministry on June 14 1958 Rehman had to submit his resignation The new United Front Ministry shared this fate on the same day The President declared Governor s rule in the province on June

24 1958 [6] After two months Ataur Rehman was reinstated as Chief Minister On September 20 1958 when the Assembly met the Government moved a motion of no-confidence in the Speaker accusing him of being of an unsound mind The Speaker was assaulted and Government and opposition members exchanged blows The no-confidence motion was declared passed On September 23 when Deputy Speaker Shahid Ali came to conduct the proceedings of the House he was assaulted by the members of the opposition. The police intervened and the opposition members were thrown out of the House The Deputy Speaker died as a result of the injuries received in the House

Describing the political confusion prevailing throughout the country Ayub Khan says 'Throughout this confusion there was incessant talk of holding general elections under the 1956 Constitution These elections were promised for November 1957 They were then postponed to 1958 The President had thoroughly exploited the weaknesses of the Constitution and had got every one connected with the political life of the country utterly exposed and discredited I do not think that he even seriously wanted to hold general elections he was looking for a suitable opportunity to abrogate the Constitution Indeed he was setting the stage for it [77]

It is said that Prime Minister Feroze Khan Noon had come to an understanding with Suhrawardy Keeping his eye on the forthcoming general elections Suhrawardy was trying to build an alliance between the major groups in East and West Pakistan In fact by taking a firm stand over the question of one unit he had won the support of Punjabi leaders including Noon and Daultana His party in East Pakistan had already agreed to work for a neutral foreign policy [78] President Mirza saw clearly that if Suhrawardy were to succeed in carrying out his scheme there was no possibility of his being re-elected as President Suhrawardy had openly started attacking the role of the President. He

charged the President with entering into a conspiracy against the Awami League in East Pakistan

That President Mirza was determined to proclaim his dictatorship is an accepted fact Feroze Khan Noon whose Cabinet was dismissed in October 1958 testifies that Iskander Mirza had suggested it to him on one or two occasions and asked him if he would not say that a democratic form of government was not suited for Pakistan and he therefore should resign and hand over the government to the President When he realised that his Prime Minister was bent on carrying on to see the elections through abrogation of the Constitution was the only way to dislodge me [80]

This allegation is substantiated by a statement issued by Dr Khan Sahib who threatened that in case the situation did not improve all political parties would be disbanded and a Revolutionary Council would be formed to govern the country [81]

On May 9 1958 Dr Khan Sahib was assassinated by an ex-Patwari Attaullah Khan It was a mystery The accused confessed that he was a member of the Khaksar Party Close relatives of Dr Khan Sahib still believe that Iskander Mirza was behind this murder [8]

Having discredited almost all political leaders President Mirza on October 7 1958 abrogated the Constitution and declared Martial Law General Ayub Khan the Supreme Commander was made the Chief Martial Law Administrator On October 27 1958 General Ayub Khan forced the President to quit his office and leave the country to settle down in the U K

While Pakistanis as a nation lost their democratic rights East Pakistan was turned into a colony of West Pakistani ruler In about eleven years since independence three Bengali Prime Ministers and an equal number of Chief Ministers of East Bengal a number of Bengali ministers and a Bengali Governor was sacked Thousands of innocent Bengalis were put behind the bars several students were killed as a result of police firing and the name of East Bengal

was changed to East Pakistan Despite the fact that the Bengalis were in a majority in the total population of Pakistan they had no say in determining the future of their nation They had yet to suffer more under the military regime of Ayub Khan

NOTES

1 Even in August 1951 General Ayub Khan started thinking in terms of military alliance with the United States (cf General Muqeem Khan *The Story of the Pakistan Army* (Karachi 1963) page 154
2 Khalid B Sayeed *The Political System of Pakistan* op cit page 269
3 Colonel Mohammed Ahmad *My Chief* (Lahore Longmans Green & Co 1960) pp 73 76
4 *A History of Pakistan* op cit page 188
5 *The Pakistan Times* August 14 1953 *Pacific Affairs* (Richmond) June 1955
6 *A History of Pakistan* op cit page 189
7 *The Statistical Bulletin* Karachi February 1959
8 *Pakistan Times* February 7 & 8 1953
9 *Five years of Pakistan* (Karachi 1953) p 78
10 *A History of Pakistan* op cit page 191 and 192
11 *Ibid*
12 The literal meaning being The Peasant and Workers Party
13 *The Pakistan Times* July 30 1953
14 *The Dawn* July 30 1953
15 *A History of Pakistan* op cit page 196
15a The text of the United Front Programme which is known as Twenty One Points can be found in the *Dwan* April 4 1954 Some of the other demands were
  a Rejection of the draft Constitution dissolution of the Constituent Assembly and its replacement by a directly elected body
  b Complete freedom from Centre with regard to control of export
  c General staff should be transferred from Karachi to Dacca and ordinance factories built there
  d Teaching in schools should be conducted only in Bengali
  e Economic and social rights for workers should be guaranteed in accordance with the conventions of the International Labour Organisation

f A r vision of wag s al s and r duction of the diff rences bet w n th rat s of pay of the higher and lower governm nt offi ials should be made

g Consultation b tw en the Centr and East B ngal on the alloca tion of foreign exch ing

h D valuation of *Pakistani currency*

i Abolition of Indo-Pakistan pa sport and visa system and all the existing restrictions on trade between East and West Bengal

15b Tariq Ali *Pakistan* op cit page 6

16a Karl Von Vorys, *Political D vel pment in Pakistan* op cit pag 103

16 *A History of Pakistan* op cit page 200

17 *Th Dawn* Karachi March 4 1954

18 *Ibid* March 17 18 and 19 1954 Karl Von Vory *Political Deve lopments in Pakistan* op cit p ge 103 The Hou e onsisted of 309 seats

19 *The New Ag* March 28 1954

20 This mill was own d by a West Pak stan B hra Seth Adamji

21 Khalid B Sayeed *The P litical System of Pakistan* op cit pag 73

22 *A His ory of Pakistan* op cit page 04

23 *The Pak stan Times* May 1° 1954

24 *Th Dawn* May 18 1°54

25 *The Pakistan Times* May 30 1954 K Callard *Pakistan—A Politi cal Study* (1957) p 58

26 *The Pakistan Times* May 31 1954 The Central Government doub d that the Governor of Ea t Bengal Chaudhury Khaliqu za man would be firm enough Iskand r Mirza was appointed as he was a former officer of the Political D partment of the British Indian Gov rnment He had already during the Briti h period made a name for himself by suppr s ing the Pukhtun movement He was expected to deal with East B ngal n his characteristic tough way The Central Government paid no attention to th se manipula tions Bhashani made a similar d laration

27 *The Dawn* May 31 1954 The irony was that the same per on was again to be appointed Paki tan s Minister of Interior only thirteen months later during the Prime Ministership of another *Mohamm d Ali Chaudhury from the Punjab. Later on Huq* was appointed Governor of East Bengal Again he was di mis ed Ayub Khan p e ented him with the highest award—Nishan i Pakistan In May 1971 when Pakistani Army was playing with the lives of the B ngali the Pakistan Government celebrated Sher i B ngal Day as a tribute to the servi es of Fa lul Huq

28 *The New Age* June 13 1954 *A History of Pakistrn* op cit page 216
29 *Th Pakistan Times* June 1 1954
29a Khalid B Sayeed *The Political System of Pakistan*, op cit, p 73
30 Under this Act the Government could start legal proceedings against Ministers or members of the A sembly on charges of mis conduct or corruption
31 *Constituent Assembly of Pakistan Debates* I (September 9 1955)
32 *The Pakistan Times* September 21 1954
33 *Ibid* September 22 1954 It may be recalled that the same Governor General had dismissed Na imuddin s Cabinet in April 1953 although the Cabinet enjoyed the confidence of the House
34 *The Dawn* Karachi Septemb r 22 1954
35 Ayub Khan *Friends not Masters* (Oxford 1968) page 50
36 *Ibid* pag 51
37 *Ibid* page 51
38 *Ibid* page 52
39 *Ibid* *The Pakistan Times* November 19 1953
40 D N Bannerjee *East Pakistan* op cit page 75
41 *The Pakistan Times* October 25 1956
42 Maulvi Tamizuddin was Sp ak r of th dissolved Assembly He challenged the Governor G n ral s order in the Sind High Court
43 Karl Von Vorys *Political Dev lopments in Pakistan* op cit pp 239 206
44 The Committee of th Con tituent As embly which examin d the authenticity of this document expressed this view (cf The Con tituent Ass mbly of Pakistan D bat s I (S pt mber 6 1955 pp 508-513 and Septemb r 9 1955 pp 612 614)
45 Khalid B Saye d *The Political System of Pakistan* op cit p 77
46 *One Unit Documents* Document B para 2
47 *Ibid* Document B para 6 and Document X para 7 (biii)
48 On Unit Documents Document X, para 9
49 *The Pakistan Times* October 24 1954
50 *Ibid* D cember 12 1954
51 *The Dwan* March 28 1954
52 U if Patel and Two Others v The Crown, reprodu ed in Jennings pp 245 and 255
53 *Th Pakistan Times* August 14 1955
54 D N Bannerjee *East Pakistan* op c t pag 87
55 Z A Suleri *Pakistan s Lost Years* (Lahore) pp 109 110
56 Suhrawardy oppos d th s parate electorate system H supported the conception of a B ngali nation consisting of Muslims and Hindus He was even opposed to the conception of an I lamic

State Mian Iftakharuddin was the only member from West Pakistan who supported Suhrawardy In a historic speech on the occasion he said I am alone but future historians will testify that I have supported the caus of justice As Fazlul Huq s group supported the official move representatives of the minorities from Bengal joined hands with the Awami leader and withdrew support from the Bengal ministry headed by Abu Sarkar (See Dawn January 9 10 and 12 1956

57 As Suhrawardy had joined the opposition at the Centre Iskander Mirza had joined hands with Fazlul Huq The person whom Mirza had dubbed as a traitor was appointed Minister of the Interior Later on he was appointed Governor of East Pakistan because he agreed to play to the tune of Mirza

58 From July to August 1956 the Sarkar Government was supported by no more than 90—93 members of the East Pakistan Legislative Assembly which had 300 members The by election to the National Assembly in which the candidate of the United Front received only 85 votes while the Awami candidate obtained 143 votes and won the seat was symptomatic of the declining influence of the United Front (*Dawn* September 6 1956)

59 *A History of Pakistan* op cit page 275

60 *The Pakistan Times* September 5 1956

61 It may be recalled that the West Pakistan Provincial Assembly had decided to enforce the separate electorate system while the Awami League Government in East Pakistan had voted for the joint electorate system President Mirza agreed to force Khan Sahib and his Republican party to change its views The result was that on October 12 1956 the National Assembly at the President s instance passed the Bill introducing joint electorates On November 2 the President gave his assent to the bill

62 *The Pakistan Times* February 8 9 10 1957

63 *Ibid* March 22 23 1957

64 *The Pakistan Times* July 18 1957

65 *The Pakistan Times* July 8 1957

67 Sardar Abdul Rashid was formerly the Inspector General Police of NWFP Ghulam Mohammad nominated him as Chief Minister of that province When he opposed the One Unit plan he was dismissed by President Iskander Mirza Later on he resigned from the Muslim League and joined the Republican Party After the dismissal of Khan Sahib s ministry he was elected leader of the Republican Party in the West Pakistan Legislative Assembly

68 It is interesting to note that both Mirza and Khan Sahib came to Dacca and met Bhashani on August 9 1957 Bhashani promised

to support Mirza s Republican Party and Dr Khan Sahib showered praises on Bhashani whom he called an honest patriot In fact this was the Maulana s victory because both the President and Khan Sahib assured him to breaking the One Unit of West Pakistan

69 *The Pakistan Times* September 18 1957
70 Ayub Khan *Friends Not Masters* op cit page 56
71 *Th Pakistan Times* May 11 1957
71 *A History of Pakistan* op cit page 287
72 Tariq Ali *Pakistan* op cit page 81
73 M Ahm d *My Chief* (Lahore 1960) p 97
74 *The Pakistan Times* O tober 12 1957
75 *Th Dawn* November 21, 1956 and Mar h 5 1957
76 *The Pakistan Times* June 25 1958
77 *Friends Not Masters* op cit pp 56 75
78 Khalid B Sayeed *The Political System of Pakistan* op cit page 86
79 *Ibid* p 91
80 Fero e Khan Noon *From Memory* (Lahore 1966) p 299
81 *Political Conspiracies in Pakistan* op cit page 205
82 ' Iskander Mir a used Khan Sahib s influence in building up the Republican Party But on one occasion I heard a remark which indicated tha Iskander Mirza disliked Khan Sahib s even coming to his hous Th s was at a time when Iskander was anxious that the Republicans and the Muslim League should join hands to form a new party Probably he f lt that after the el ctions the Repub licans alone would not secure an overall majority in Parliament but Khan Sahib would not agree to the breaking up of the Republican Party of which he was the leader (Feroze Khan Noon *From Memory* op cit page 294)

Chapter VIII

Fight Against the Military Regime Downfall of Ayub Khan

According to Tariq Ali the main reason for the army s *coup d etat on October 8 1958 was the bureaucracy s over riding* urge to prevent Pakistan s first-ever general elections from taking place in March 1959 *The prospects of the* forthcoming elections he adds had increased the growing restlessness of the masses and this had tempted the leaders of the opposition parties into making a number of sweeping promises of radical reform [1] The Muslim League had mobilised public opinion in West Pakistan to demand Pakistan s withdrawal from the military blocs In East Pakistan the powerful National Awami League headed by Maulana Bhashani was making a similar demand Almost all political parties in the province were pressing for complete internal autonomy and radical agrarian reforms Any democratic set up in Pakistan would have brought out the people s real representatives to the forefront and while their Government would have ensured a fair deal to the people of East Pakistan the feudal lords would have lost their grip over the economic life and administration of the country *In that event* Pakistan would have adopted an independent role in in er-

national affairs A military rule in Pakistan suited to the interests of the West Pakistani bureaucrats feudal lords big businessman and western powers That General Ayub Khan had forged links with the Central Intelligence Agency of the U S A is proved by his own private diary in which he wrote on May 5 1958 that he met Allen Dulles (the then Chief of the CIA) and thanked him for putting his brother who was the U S Foreign Secretary in the picture regarding our problems

The American as well as the British Press hailed the new regime[3] General Ayub Khan had a clear foul in his mind He was determined to crush the urge for a democratic set-up He said in clear words We must understand that democracy cannot work in hot climate To have democracy we must have a cold climate like that of Britain[4]

In order to prepare the ground for killing the spirit of democracy the Dictator wanted to prove that he was an honest ruler and wanted to lead his countrymen to economic prosperity In order to prove this contention he took drastic measures against smugglers hoarders black-marketeers and corrupt politicians Simultaneously he declared all the political parties illegal Maulana Bhashani was detained under the Security of Pakistan Act while eminent leaders like Sheikh Mujibur Rehman Abul Mansoor Ahmed Abu Khalak and Hamid ul Huq Chaudhury were arrested under the Anti Corruption Ordinance A number of senior Bengal officers were also taken into custody The Elective Bodies (Disqualification) Order issued in 1959 envisaged prosecution of politicians on a charge of misconduct The term *misconduct* was wide enough to include subversive activities jobbey and corruption This meant that according to the order besides corrupt politicians popular leaders like Suhrawardy Mujibur Rehman and others could be disqualified from holding an elective office until December 31 1966 However the order laid down that in case such politicians withdrew from public life they would not be procecuted[5] Thu the measure was enforced to blackmail the opposition leaders to

keep their mouth shut. Later on such disqualified politicians were welcomed to join the President's *Sarkari* Muslim League.

As Bengali newspapers like the *Ittefaq* and the *Dacca Times* supported disqualified politician like Suhrawardy, the Dictator decided to take action against these newspapers. This was done through an ordinance known as the Press and Publications (East Pakistan Second Amendment) Ordinance 1963. Under this Ordinance the Government was given power to close down the presses where the offending publications were printed and to take over the newspapers or journals.[6] On April 16, 1959 a special ordinance was passed by the Martial Law Regime which empowered the Government to change the management of newspapers which in the opinion of the Government published or contained matters likely to endanger the defence, external affairs or security of Pakistan. The next step was to organise the National Press Trust[7] which acquired a number of existing newspapers and periodicals to build up the image of the military rulers.

In the beginning Major General Umrao Khan was appointed Martial Law Administrator in East Pakistan. Later he was replaced by Zakir Hussain as the Governor of that Province. It may be recalled that this gentleman was the Inspector General of Police when General Ayub Khan was the G O C of East Pakistan. He had sought the army's help to suppress Bengali policemen in 1948. It is interesting to note that on October 10, 1958 the judges of the East Pakistan High Court claiming lack of authority refused to administer the oath of office to the newly appointed Governor. Ayub Khan sensed danger but did not order the judges arrest. He did not dispense with the oath of office. Instead he issued an ordinance which directed that Pakistan shall be governed as nearly as may be in accordance with the late Constitution. The courts were promptly reconstituted.[8]

Despite the fact that Ayub Khan tried to discredit the political leaders of East Bengal by disqualifying them from taking part in public life and tried his utmost to suppress the Press the people hated him Even the persons whom he had associated with his regime and constitution making committees were bold enough to demand restoration of the parliamentary democratic set-up while Ayub warned against talk of the parliamentary system The Pakistan Observer Dacca revealed that thirteen representative organisations of East Pakistan demanded restoration of the parliamentary system of government.[9] The Dacca Bar Association also raised its voice in support of this demand The Foreign Minister Manzur Qadir attacked the Bar Association on this account The Martial Law Administrator threatened that the full force of Martial Law would be brought against "playing politics [10] Chief Justice Shubahuddin who was one of the members of the so-called Constitution Commission protested against this warning with the result that the warning was toned down.[11] Another Bengali member of the Commission Law Minister Mohammed Ibrahim refused to tow the President s line while Manzur Qadir Bhutto and Shoib supported the President s view Conflict became so sharp that Ibrahim refused to attend the meetings left Karachi and withdrew to his home in Dacca 'The President anxious to avoid publicly demonstrating a severe rift among his adviser made several atttempts to conciliate him [11a] On April 15 1962 Mohammed Ibrahim resigned as a protest against this state of affairs [12] It is said that even in his note of dissent he supported the parlimentary form

The Press and public opinion in East Bengal never endorsed the new Constitution which aimed at enforcing the dictatorship While the controlled Press in West Pakistan hailed the new Constitution as reflecting the true aspirations of the people in East Pakistan there was sullen silence A foreign observer describes the Bengalis reaction in these words

"The Governor was not available for comment The professors at the University in order to avoid being interviewed refused to answer phones After some pursuit the head of the Geography Department submitted to giving a favourable statement Later his colleague in the Political Science Department joined him The more senior members of the Faculty however remained silent Most conspicuously the Pakistan Observer and the Bengali language dailies refrained from editorial comment and refused to devote space to the reporting of accolades If I cannot report unfavourable reaction I shall not report anything explained the editor of the Observer[13]

The Director of Bureau of National Reconstruction warned that the offence of propaganda against the Constitution was interpreted to include silence [14]

The President in order to woo the Bengalis undertook a tour of cyclone affected areas He met different leaders and said during a press conference that he was committed to develop the economy of East Pakistan He also promised that no West Pakistani officer would be posted to East Pakistan unless absolutely necessary [15] He admitted that East Pakistan had suffered due to neglect However he could not tolerate any criticism of his concept of democracy In order to terrorise his opponents Suhrawardy was arrested and detained under the Security Act on January 30 1962 for acting in a manner prejudicial to the security and safety of Pakistan" The Times (London) in an editorial under the caption To deter Others condemned this incident thus[16]

> The arrest of Mr Suhrawardy just before a new Constitution is to be promulgated for Pakistan is not fully explained by the vague special statement Perhaps the prospect of a political quickening after the new Contitution finally emerges has sent Mr Suhrawardy into detention It would not be the first time that the Pakistan Government has made an exemplary arrest to warn off others

Suhrawardy s arrest was accompanied by unleashing a further flood of threats including a promise of additional arrests [17]

Two weeks later the Security of Pakistan Act was amended to remove writs of habeas corpus in connection with political detenus from the jurisdiction of the courts [18] On April 2 the Government threatened to invade the mosques by banning meetings and processions for a religious purpose if their nature was political [19]

There was already enough smouldering restlessness beneath the surface Suhrawardy s arrest caused widespread riots Thousands of students in Dacca Narain Ganj Comilla Naokhali Barisal, Kushtia Chittagong Sylhet Munshiganj, Jessore and other places organised violent demonstrations against it They pulled down the pictures of the Dictator and demanded restoration of parliamentary democracy Students of Dacca University reported the special correspondent of the Guardian demonstrated, calling for an end of Martial Law wrecking a bus and even burning pictures of Ayub Khan The students of East Pakistan have revived politics unblushingly and broken the taboo [20]

Lieutenant General Azam Khan Governor of East Pakistan who had earned the Bengalis love and confidence was really very sympathetic towards the Bengalis He was easily accessible and readily engaged in friendly chats He never missed a chance to shake a hand or listen attentively to a complaint He embraced his fellow countrymen without distinction of class or position During the cyclones of 1961 he promptly arrived on the scene and personally directed relief

Among the recent leaders of Pakistan he was almost alone in gaining the confidence of the Bengalis [21] However his popularity based on his performance was a personal one

The bureaucracy sabotaged his efforts at every turn and even circulated derogatory rumours about him in the President s secretariat [22]

The President could not tolerate opposition to his political ideas He sent his minister Manzur Qadir to East Pakistan to pacify the student When the latter tried to defend the Ayub Constitution the students of Dacca University nearly

killed him [3] The anger and bitterness which had been repressed for a long time came to the surface When the Constitution was finally published the students of the Dacca Medical College and the Engineering College went on strike demanding the restoration of full democratic rights and complete internal autonomy for East Pakistan

Following the policies of his predecessors the President tried to divert the attention of the people to India and Afghanistan whom he dubbed as enemies of Pakistan While delivering his convocation address to the students of the Peshawar University he made the accusation that Calcutta and Kabul based forces of disruption lost no opportunity to strike at each and every point of our vulnerability

The President had to face hostile and violent demonstrations in Dacca Bengali students burnt his pictures and raised hostile slogans as he drove past New Market He had to cancel his visit to Rajshahi Lieutenant General Azam Khan submitted his resignation on May 10 1962 In fact he was sacked

The President signed the new Constitution on March 1 1962 Despite the fact that all political parties were banned 44 per cent of the individuals elected to the National Assembly were the members of these parties—and many were critical of the new Constitution s curbs on legislative and judicial authority [24] This was a warning signal to the Dictator who was informed through the official controlled Press that the disqualified leaders were very much alive and kicking And indeed it was they who have taken a lion s share in running the election [25] The Dictator had already promulgated another ordinance to prohibit formation or revival of political parties and collection of funds or acquisition of property for political purposes [26]

Maulvi Tamizuddin former Speaker of the National Assembly in his first statement after his election as a member of the new Assembly demanded the amending of the Constitution The President rejected the plea saying The recommencement of the Constitutional process does not mean the

re tart of political life from the state where it stood on October 8 1958 [27]

The President now tried to divide and rule He nominated former Prime Minister Mohammad Ali Bogra Wahiduzzaman an industrialist from Faridpur Abdur Sabur Khan a businessman from Khulna Fazlul Quader of Chittagong and Abdul Monem Khan a deserter from Nurul Amin s party in his Cabinet People in East Pakistan dubbed these persons as traitors They were greeted with black flags rotten eggs angry slogans and massive demonstrations upon their return to the province In Chittagong and later in Comilla the police had to intervene to extricate Fazlul Quader Chaudhury [8] Khulna greeted A Sabur in a similar manner' [29] When the new Governor Ghulam Farooq tried to visit the University of Dacca the students blocked his way and screamed into his face Go home you stooge [0] La er on he submitted his resignation and the Central Minister of Health Abdul Monem Khan was appointed as his successor The President was opposed to the formation of political parties but it is said that his ministers especially Bhutto and Mohammad Ali Bogra pressed him to change his mind Political parties regulated by law they argued will provide an organisational framework for mass mobilization on behalf of the Government [31] Reluctantly the President agreed On June 30 the Law Minister Mohammad Munir (former Chief Justice of Punjab High Court) introduced the appropriate bill in the National Assembly It authorised the organisation of political parties on two main conditions They must be based on I lamic ideology Second they must not admit politicians disqualified under the E B D O [8] This meant that Suhrawardy Mujib-ur Rehman and other eminent Bengali leaders were to be debarred from taking part in political activities Public opinion in East Pakistan was very much enraged over this bill Sixteen leaders including former Chief Ministers Nurul Amin (Muslim League) Abu Hussan Sarkar (Krishak Sramik) and Ataur Rehman (Awami League)

announced the formation of a united front to seek removal of all restrictions on political parties[33] A public meeting held in Dacca viewed with a sense of alarm the government Bill on formation and regulation of political parties and providing therein restrictions on membership calculated to restrict the growth of democratic mass organisations public opinion and curb the unhampered functioning of democracy in the country' Mahbubul Huq referred to this resolution in the National Assembly and demanded complete restoration of political activities[34] As the Government refused to listen to the opposition most of the Bengali members staged a walk out from the House as a protest.

The militant mood in East Pakistan showed signs of an upsurge The activities of the National Democratic Front alarmed the Government about the danger of a mass movement against the dictatorship The Government controlled Press in West Pakistan warned that this was a dangerous situation and threatens to force a gulf between the East and the West [35] Despite repeated warnings from official spokesmen Suhrawardy joined the leaders of the N D F to demand a new Constituent Assembly to draw up a democratic Constitution

In order to forestall the move to revive the old Muslim League as an opposition party President Ayub Khan organised a convention of the Muslim League in Karachi As no popular leader was prepared to support the dictatorship Chaudhuri Khaliquzzaman was elected as Chief Organiser[36] A month after this convention the old guard of the Muslim League held a meeting of the Council of the Muslim League at Karachi Khwaja Nazimuddin was elected party president and Ayub Khan s brother Sardar Bahadur was elected its General Secretary Khwaja Nazimuddin pledged his support to the National Democratic Front As long as I remain President of the Muslim League declared Khwaja Nazimuddin the party will not be interested in joining the present Government because I feel under the Constitution it is not possible to give effect to all the policies enunciated

in the Muslim League[31] The Nizam-i-Islam Party headed by former Prime Minister Chaudhuri Mohammed Ali supported this view[3]

Meanwhile student unrest was on the increase in both wings Two developments were responsible for this unrest The Central Government on the basis of a report prepared by a Commission on National Education intended to increase the duration of the degree course by one year Another incident contributing to the student unrest was that the provincial governments had imposed the hated University Ordinances which forbade students from taking part in politics and those who disobeyed it risked getting their degrees rescinded As a result of this a number of students in Dacca University were arrested and their degrees recinded. On September 12 1962 the students of Dacca organised massive processions against these measures On September 17 they called for a general strike They defied prohibitory orders The police failed to disperse them The army was called out to quell the disturbances Firing was resorted to in which two persons died and more than two hundred were wounded The army was ordered to occupy parts of the city The students destroyed two government vehicles and a car belonging to a provincial Minister was burnt. The significant factor of these demonstrations was that it represented cross-sections of the population including industrial workers Similar demonstrations were held in many other places In the meantime students in Karachi were also fighting in the similar way Police resorted to firing and a number of students were killed or wounded On September 18 there was a massive demonstration in Lahore of solidarity with the East Pakistani students and some places in East Pakistan The students in Dacca formed a Council of Action to press their demands On September 30 1962 the Government gave in and accepted almost all the demands

The Government failed in its efforts to suppress the agitation for restoration of democracy Suhrawardy and later Maulana Bhashani who was released on November 3

1962 toured the province and addressed largely attended public meetings The President issued a threat to Suhrawardy in a press conference on September 28 1962 Whenever there is any destruction in the country or any threat to the safety and security of Pakistan Suhrawardy will be in the lead Had it not been for the large influx of refugees after partition no Government would have taken the risk of giving Pakistani nationality to Suhrawardy [39] Suhrawardy retorted The country is not going to be cowed down by these threats We are determined to restore true democracy [40]

When Suhrawardy toured West Pakistan he drew large audiences which accorded him an enthusiastic welcome A public meeting addressed by him at Gujranwala was disturbed by a bomb explosion This was an attempt on his life A protest meeting convened by the leaders of the N D F condemned this outrage Pro Government gangs in West Pakistan continued disturbing his meetings At one point in Karachi his assistant Abdul Mujid Khamgavi was knifed in the back [41] These incidents however did not deter Suhrawardy from continuing his struggle again t au cc acy He had succeeded in building up the N D F in the West Now he called for a national convention scheduled to take place in the first week of January 1963 His growing popularity in both the wings struck terror into the heart of the Dictator The Government controlled Pakistan Times reflected the ruler s mind thus

> Actually what has happened is that the revival of politics for the leadership has meant no more than resumption of precisely the same factional game of intrigue and manoeuvring which they played over a decade to the complete ruin and eclipse of the Muslim League [42]

The President was determined to crush the National Democratic Front Suhrawardy was arrested from his Karachi residence A couple of days before his arrest a pro-Governmen journal Nai Roshni of Karachi carried a news item which accused him of conspiring to topple the Government with the help of his American friends It was

claimed on behalf of the relatives of Suhrawardy that the latter had invited the American Ambassador to a function in connection with his own birthday Later on when he developed serious heart trouble he was removed to the Central Hospital Karachi *Daily Ittefaq* of Dacca was charged with contributing to the unrest and was financially penalized[43] On January 8 1963 the President issued two ordinances amending the Political Parties Act 1962 The National Democratic Front was banned because it operated for the purpose of propagating a political opinion It also empowered the Government to direct disqualified (EBDoed) politicians to refrain from making statements of a political nature addressing press conferences or public meetings. The second ordinance authorised the President to reduce or to waive altogether the period of disqualification of former political leaders[44] Immediately after the promulgation of these ordinances student leader Obeidur Rehman and a number of other student leaders were interned Suhrawardy from his sick bed in hospital issued a statement condemning these actions He said

This is the most blatant form of corruption on the one hand and coercion and oppression on the other[45]

It was clear from these ordinances that the Dictator was determined to crush the opposition He was actually determined to disrupt the ranks of his opposition by offering to remove the stigma of disqualification in case they agreed to join hands with him

The opposition however decided to fight against the autocratic rule A meeting of 38 opposition leaders representing the Awami League The National Awami League the Jamaiat Islami the Nizam i Islam and the Council Muslim League was held at the Karachi residence of Suhrawardy on January 19 and 20 1963 The Convention demanded the restoration of parliamentary democracy A 10-member committee was formed to organise the N D F in West Pakistan to launch struggle for restoration of democracy All of a sudden all the participants were arrested The credit

for condemning Government's action in the National Assembly goes to its Bengali member. They also raised the question of economic disparity between the two wings and discrimination in services.

In the face of growing opposition to his dictatorship President Ayub Khan got himself elected as President of the Convention Muslim League. The Government controlled Press in West Pakistan called it a Red Letter Day in the history of the Muslim League.[46] In this capacity he utilised his Government's resources to strengthen the organisation. Wherever he went the administration was expected to boost the activities of the Convention Muslim League. Those who offered to join the organisation were naturally compensated in several ways including of course the grant of licences and permits.

The President started dropping hints that he intended to pursue an independent foreign policy. At the same time he started an anti India campaign. He wanted to secure the Bengalis support for his policies. He offered his hand of friendship to Khwaja Nazimuddin whom he called my close friend. In June 1962 he appointed Mohammad Ali Bogra as his Foreign Minister in place of Manzur Qadir. It is interesting to note that two days earlier Bogra had made a very fiery speech against Manzur dubbing him a second Rasputin.[47] He said: Manzur has given an incomplete Constitution. In case the President was allowed to act on his free will he would have respected basic rights of the people but the evil influence of this Rasputin (Manzur) is responsible for all the defects.[48]

The President promptly visited the cyclone affected areas in East Pakistan and personally donated funds for relief.[49] On February 8 1963 the President announced the setting up of a subsidiary capital at Dacca. On April 13 1963 when the opposition demanded the setting up of a committee for removing East and West imbalances in the Central Services the Government supported the demand.[50]

The President succeeded in creating a rift in the National Democratic Front In May 1963 the deputy leader of the opposition in the National Assembly and prominent leader of the Front along with several others was arrested The Governor of East Pakistan Monem Khan dismissed Dr Mohammad Hussain Vice Chancellor of the Dacca University for his failure to maintain proper order in the University

During the Dacca session of the Constituent Assembly President Ayub Khan invited Khwaja Nazimuddin to his official residence The next day Khwaja Nazimuddin instructed opposition Muslim League members in the National Assembly to support the Government s Amendment Bill which aimed at renaming the country as the Islamic Republic of Pakistan The leader of the opposition Sardar Bahadur Khan *felt humiliated* He submitted his resignation as a protest against Nazimuddin s instructions[61]

Having put almost all the militant Bengali leaders behind the bars the President was now determined to strengthen his own position His propaganda machine was trying to boost him as the strongest leader in Asia He started wooing leftist leaders by posing himself as a progressive ruler He induced the National Awami League s leader Maulana Bhashani to meet him In August 1963 Maulana Bhashani visited Lahore and Karachi where he met West Pakistan s Governor the Nawab of Kalabagh and the President Maulana Bhashani agreed to lead an official delegation to China in December 1963[5] Commenting upon this development the *Times* (London) wrote

> President Ayub appointed him (Bhashani) to lead a delegation and that journey from which he returned this week appears to have changed all his ideas The achievements of China had so impressed him that realising how backward Pakistan was in comparison he was inclined he said to spend rest of his life in prayers He was calling off civil disobedience movement [3] Commenting upon the Maulana s role a Pakistani newspaper wrote

The role of the National Awami Party leadership seems

to fit in more on the Government side than on the opposition side and yet it happens to be sitting in the opposition in the National Assembly and the provincial legislatures Maulana Bhashani tried to woo the President at Rawalpindi in September Then he visited China with the blessings of the Government On his return he said in Chittagong what would become a loyal pro Government spokesman May be he is still courting the President and trying to persuade him to release political pri oners That he is apparently not willing to do The mystry is that the Maulana still seems to be hopeful or maybe he is afraid of weakening the President s posture in relation to the American lobby in Pakistan [4]

Student leader Tariq Ali who met Maulana Bhashani in June 1964 states thus

In Peking the Maulana had discussions with the Chinese leaders including Mao Tse tung and Chou En lai According to Pakistan s Ambas ador to China at that time General Raza who was present during the Maulana s discussions with Chou the latter said in no mistakable terms that the Chinese would welcome a reapproachement between the National Awami Party and the Ayub regime According to Raza the Maulana agreed Whatever the truth of that story there is no doubt that the attitude of Bhashani s party to Ayub s regime was discussed in Peking When I was in East Pakistan in June 1969 I asked the Maulana during the course of a tape recorded conversation When you went to China what did Mao discuss with you when you met him? His reply was quite unequivocal and does seem to confirm General Raza s impression Mao said to me that at the present time China s relationship with Pakistan was extremely fragile and that the United States Russia and India would do their utmost to break this relationship He said You are our friend and if at the pre ent moment you continue your struggle against the Ayub Government, it will only strengthen the hands of

Russia America and India It is against our principles to interfere with your work but we would advise you to proceed slowly and carefully Give us a chance to deepen our friendship with your Government [5]

It may be recalled that Pakistan had started wooing China even during Suhrawardy s regime The Internal situation in occupied Kashmir was proving a headache to Pakistan At that time both China and Russia had very good relations with India American attempts to raise the Kashmir issue in the Security Council were repeatedly foiled by Soviet Russia through her veto Russia s interception of an American spy plane that flew from an American controlled military base near Peshawar had already created tension between Russia and Pakistan. Russia had started cultivating friendship with Afghanistan with the result that Afghanistan started pressing her demand for Pakhtunistan In 1960 and 1961 the Pakistan Air Force bombed the border states of Dir and Jandul where the Pashtu speaking population had started attacking Pakistani posts The Pakistani Army attacked these States and arrested their rulers [66]

In the meantime the relations between India and China became strained Actually this was the outcome of growing enmity between the Soviet Union and China While China was turning against India America and Russia were coming nearer to each other and their sympathies lay with India which had refused to be bullied by China s threatening posture Ayub Khan wanted to secure America s support to pressurise India over the question of Kashmir He went to the U S A but failed to make America agree to stop economic and military aid to India He criticised American policies thus

> Pakistan is upset and disappointed over the soundness of the U S policy in this region. I ask can it be that the USA is abandoning its true friends for people who may not prove such good friends? American aid has allowed India economically and militarily to pose a greater threat

to Pakistan Pakistan is therefore re examining her membership in the US backed SEATO and CENTO [57]

On October 18 1962 at a time when Indian Army was busy resisting the Chinese onslaught Pakistan and China started talks in Peking Similarly when the Anglo American powers pressed India to enter into direct talks with Pakistan in March 1963 Pakistan Foreign Minister Z A Bhutto left for China in response to an invitation from the Chinese Premier and immediately on his arrival at Peking the border agreement was signed and announced by the two countries This was followed by a number of other steps such as a trade agreement and probably a second anti Indian military alliance Maulana Bhashani who was inclined towards China probably thought that the growing friendship between Pakistan and China would end American influence in Pakistan and it would help his followers to bring about a peaceful economic and social revolution in East Pakistan Subsequent events however prove that while Ayub Khan wanted to grab Kashmir with Chinese help China wanted to wean away Pakistan from American alliances and to exploit Pakistan s anti Indian sentiment to foment troubles in Assam Nagaland and NEFA Despite the alliance with Communist China Ayub Khan did not allow propagation of socialism in Pakistan The Communist Party remained an unlawful organisation and curbs on freedom of the Press and platform were never lifted A new ordinance was enforced which empowered the police authorities to attend and take notes of the proceedings of even the private meetings of political worker In Augus 1963 the *Dacca Times* filed a wri petition in the Eas Pakistan High Court challenging the Press and Public Ordinance This Ordinance disallowed the Press to criticise the Government The court set it aside on the plea that the paper concerned had every right to create public opinion by healthy and even forceful criticism of the Government in power Similarly the court set aside the Government s action agains the daily *Ittefaq* of Dacca [58]

It may further be recalled that Ayub Khan s regime was facing troubles on several accounts In June an East Pakistani member of the National Assembly Mashibur Rehman revealed that there were over 500 political prisoners in Pakistan On June 28 1962 the leader of the opposition Sardar Bahadur Khan revealed that the demand for autonomy in Baluchistan had taken the form of guerilla warfare He disclosed startling details of concentration camps being run in Quetta and of prisoners being hanged by their feet half naked [59] At a press conference in July Sardar Bahadur Khan attacked his brother s regime

We feel betrayed Never before was corruption so rife the administration so weak and people so demoralised as at present A ruthless minority presides over our destiny Under no conditions are we prepared to pull the chestnuts out of the fire for them The answer to the grave political situation lies in the return of power to the people [60]

On April 26 1963 Sardar Bahadur Khan said If I had known that I would have to pass the fag end of my life in the e political conditions I would have revised my stand on the establishment of Pakistan [61]

In order to keep the people ignorant of these developments the President issued an Ordinance prohibiting the newspapers to publish unauthorised reports of the proceedings of the National Assembly The Ordinance instructed the newspapers to publish in full all the press notes or handouts distributed by the Cen ral or Provincial Governments [6] The Civil and Military Gazette of Lahore had to cease publication as a result of this order Ano her Ordinance banned the publication of any news item relating to a strike or industrial unrest The Pre s and Publication Ordinance gave powers to the District Magistrates to prosecute journalists employed in newspapers that defied Government orders They were al o enpowered to disallow the resumption of publication of any newspaper that had discontinued publication on any ground This meant that even if a journal

had to discontinue publication on account of failure of electricity the District Magistrate was within his power to disallow its resumption At least two prominent journals had to cease publication because official pressure was put on their printers to cancel their declarations and the new printers were disallowed to file new declarations Weekly Iqdam had to cease publication because it published an article supporting the demand for restoration of parliamentary democracy Although its editor destroyed all his copies the District Magistrate banned it However when the editor wrote that by parliamentary democracy he meant Ayub Khans conception of democracy he was allowed to resume the publication of his journal [t]

Ayub Khan knew that people were opposed to his regime He therefore wanted to do something spectacular His colleagues and the Government controlled Press started a propaganda campaign that India was preparing to launch an aggression against Pakistan On July 17 1963 Foreign Minister Bhutto said

> If India were in her frustration to turn her guns against Pakistan the international situation is such today that Pakistan would not be alone in that conflict [63]

Bhuttos statement was widely interpreted to mean that Peking would support Pakistan in event of a war with India [64] On December 27 1963 Srinagar erupted into riotous turmoil over reports that a sacred Muslim relic (hair of the Prophet) had been stolen [65] There are strong reasons to believe that the theft was engineered by Pakistani agents Pakistan had amassed her armies on the Kashmir border to attack the State at this time However the timely action taken by the Government of India foiled this plan. Pakistani rulers exploited this situation by provoking communal riots in East Pakistan. These riots were engineered by the responsible members of Ayub Khans Cabinet and fanned by the Government controlled Press. The Minister of External Affairs Z.A Bhutto described the theft as a dastardly attack on the religious sentiments of Muslims a

During the hour of trial Awami leaders including Sheikh Mujibur Rehman Attaur Rahman Mahmud Ali Zahur Hussain Manik Mian of the Daily *Ittefaq* struggled hard for communal peace The Daily *Ittefaq* on January 5 1964 wrote

Any decent citizen of Pakistan would be saddened and ashamed by these incidents It is natural that there should be concern among the Pakistani people over the theft of the Holy Relic But those who have created internal discontent disorder and riots on the pretext of this inci dent are not motivated by religion nor are they the well-wishers of Pakistan Above all the name of the messenger of peace the Holy Prophe canno be made a pretext for riots

Sangbad another Bengali daily from Dacca on January 4 1964 criticised the reactionary circles for inciting com-munal pas ion over the theft of the sacred Relic resulting in the Khulna riots The paper added

Communalism is no yet d ad It is the principal weapon in the hands of reactionarie to confu e the people s unity and their struggle The reactionari s did not feel the pangs of conscience in using this terrible weapon in their own intere ts We wish to ask why the au horities could not prevent strikes in so many factories in Khulna over the theft of the sacred Relic Did they not know that the goonda elements are fanning communal feelings ?

Political leaders who engine red th se rio s wan ed to kill two birds with one stone On the one hand they wan ed to reduce the Bengali majority into a minority and to divert the people s attention from their basic issues and on the other they warted to s rengthen the hands of the Dic ator However the nationalist elements who were struggling against the dicta torship had come to realise tha the outbreak of communal violence was inspired by ves ed interes s and the Bengali sp aking Hindus and Muslims had so much in common tha th y mu live in peace and harmony

It is significant to note that while the Pakistan Government failed in its ambitions to invade Kashmir the nationalist elements in East Pakistan realised the dangerous implications of Ayub Khan s sinister game of fomenting communal trouble Sheikh Mujibur Rehman had already revived the Awami League On March 9 1964 the League demanded full autonomy for East Pakistan The President was upset over this development He called his opponents hired mules to which the ex Central Law Minister Mohammad Ibrahim replied by saying that he preferred to be a hired mule in history rather than be a member of the rulind Muslim League [9]

To ensure Ayub s continuation in power the Government accepted the Franchise Commission's proposal that the universal franchise should be exercised indirectly in view of the conditions prevalent in the country [9] East Pakistan reacted sharply to this decision The All-Party Action Committee comprising the Awami League the Nizam i Islam Party and the National Awami Party announced the holding of protest meetings On March 18 and 19 1964 a big public meeting was held in Dacca Sheikh Mujibur Rehman and Maulana Bhashani spoke on a common platform They demanded adult franchise and direct elections When the question of the electoral system and the indirect method of election came in for discussion in the National Assembly, the opposition opposed it and staged a walk out An East Pakistani demand for having in turn an East and a West Pakistani as President was rejected In protest the deputy leader of the opposition Ramizuddin charged the West Pakistanis with ambition to dominate East Pakistan [61]

The President was determined to get himself re elected and to secure a clear majority for his party in the Central as well as the provincial legislature. He allowed the Governor of East Pakistan Monem Khan to indulge in political repression and distribute political and financial patronage to secure support for his party To combat the opposition the Government increased its repression in the Universities set

up a *National Press Trust* to co ordinate its propaganda and ventured into the cultural sphere to see how the nation's writers could be used [81] A writers guild was set up under the chairmanship of the President's personal secretary Qudratullah Shabab to propagate Ayub Khan's political conceptions Leading capitalists like Seth Adamji and Saeed Sehgal were encouraged to award prizes to deserving writers These industrialists and feudal lords like Nawab Akbar Khan of Hoti Mardan were induced to start big news papers under the management of the so called National Press Trust who bought the services of leading journalists on fat salaries and allowance On July 1 1964 the managements of private educational institutions were asked to ban their teachers from taking part in politics The Government in order to terrorise the opposition put behind the bar a number of students and party workers in East Pakistan Maulvi Farid Ahmad of the Nizam i Islam Party was arrested [81] Ataur Rahman A S M Abdul Jalil and some forty others met the same fate in Khulna and Rajshahi [81] Another Bengali leader Abu Mohammad Ferdous was declared abs conder his property was attached to force him surrender to the police [83] On September 24 protest meetings were held all over the province Even the students observed a complete strike [8] In Chittagong the police attacked protesting demonstrators with the result that more than one hundred persons were injured [8]

It was a total strike In Dacca reported the *Pakistan Observer* even the clocks stopped ticking [85] The Government was forced to release these prisoners

It was due to the efforts of Khwaja Nazimuddin that a Combined Opposition Party (C O P) comprising the Council Muslim League the Awami Party the Nizam i Islam Party and the National Awami Party was formed to contest the elections [8] The C O P persuaded Miss Fatima Jinnah to contest the presidential election as their own candidate However it failed to have a joint list of candidates for the basic democratic elections and in parts of the country the

C O P candidates contested against one another Similarly their nine point programme made no reference to foreign policy or economic and agrarian reform It was limited to a demand for a democratisation of the Constitution

Miss Jinnah the sister of the Father of the Nation commanded immense respect from the people Her decision to accept the C O P offer shocked Ayub and his courtiers Ayub Khan engaged the services of fanatic *Ulemas* who denounced the election of a female candidate to run the administration of the State Maulana Shamasul Huq of Dacca said that Islam forbade women to become rulers [91] and it was a sin to support her To this Maulana Maudoodi Amir of Jamaat Islami retorted I shall prefer committing one sin by supporting the woman candidate to committing ten sins by supporting the candidate of President Ayub Khan [9]

Miss Jinnah in her speeches tried to tarnish the President s image by accusing him of having helped his son Gohar Ayub to establish the Gandhara Industries She indicated the regime for arbitrariness and corruption She demanded the restoration of democracy civil liberties and universal direct suffrage Wherever she went she drew large audiences Ayub Khan on the other hand had to rely upon the services of police and other officers for collecting crowds for his meetings On November 6 1964 the *Dacca Times* published a photostatic copy of a letter issued by the District Magistrate to about one hundred transporters in Rangpur (East Pakistan) asking them to place their vehicles at the disposal of the Government so that crowds might be brought to the President s meetings Even the people who greeted Ayub at airports and railway stations were paid On one such occasion the Karachi Convention Muslim League spent Rs 50 000 for his reception Truck-loads of workers were brought out from industrial areas on payment of Re 1 per head *The Outlook* of Karachi which exposed these tactics on August 1 1964 had to cease publication on that account.

Ayub Khan resorted to an anti Indian propaganda campaign At one stage he said that political instability resulting from Miss Jinnah s success would encourage India to attack and enslave Pakistan and to slaughter the Indian Muslims[98] His supporters would say Muslims in Delhi are praying with tears in their eyes and saying Oh God give victory to Ayub so that we may be saved Still he was no sure of his success In a threatening tone he said If the opposition wins the nation will dig its grave The result will be perhaps a bloody revolution unlike that of the Martial Law[99]

Ayub Khan won the election He was re-elected President for another five years While he got 49 951 votes Miss Jinnah go 28 691 However the former got 21012 votes from East Pakistan As against this Miss Jinnah got 18434 votes in this province This insignificant difference in East Pakistan reflected the mind of the Bengalis who resisted the Government s pressure tactics which included calling upon the army to start patrolling the country and deployment of Development officials to frighten and persuade the BD s to vote for the Government party Another instrument to do the Government s bidding was the local police officials[100]

It is significant to note that although Maulana Bhashani s National Awami Party had joined the COP the Maulana did not take part in the election campaign on account of what he termed his ill health The plea of ill health has frequently prevented Bhashani from taking active part in popular campaigns against the dictatorship[101]

The ruling Muslim League secured a majority of 120 seats in the National Assembly The opposition secured 15 seats (COP 10 NDF 5) in East Pakistan and one in West Pakistan However the ruling party failed to get an absolute majority in the East Pakistan Assembly It got only 60 seats 58 went to independents and 25 to the opposition Later on the ruling party was able to win over the support of the independents

Intoxicated with his father's victory Captain Gohar Ayub led hundreds of hired goondas into Karachi where the majority of voters had supported Miss Jinnah On January 13 1965 I received a letter from Karachi which was posted on the 8th This letter described glaringly the undemocratic cruel and inhuman acts of Gohar Ayub and his hired goondas A summary of this letter is as follows

> In January 1964 the Hindus of East Pakistan were persecuted and now in January 1965 Muslim refugees were made victims of terrorism and barbarism Second January was the first day of horrible arson loot murder and destruction Between January 2 and January 8 one dozen refugee settlements suffered horrible destruction. About 800 houses were burnt down 175 persons murdered and 400 wounded Sixty four women were abducted and raped Nineteen persons including women were burnt alive Leaders and workers of the United Front are being arrested Police refused to give any assistance to the unfortunate refugees Miss Jinnah said— Why do you shoot them shoot me [102]

A feeling of impotent frustration swept the country The COP still existed in theory but in practice had disintegrated Bhashani had joined hands with the Dictator and Suhrawardy had died in December 1963 in Beirut [103] The opposition leaders tried to regroup and met in Lahore in March 1965 Sheikh Mujibur Rehman in the meanwhile had announced his six point plan which was as follows

1 A federal system of Government parliamentary in nature and based on adult franchise
2 The Federal Government shall deal with only Defence and Foreign Affairs All other subjects shall be dealt by the federating States
3 Two separate but freely convertible currencies for the two parts of the country or one currency for the whole country In this case effective constitutional measures to be taken to prevent flight of capital from East to West Pakistan

4. Power of taxation and revenue collection shall be vested in the federating units and not in the Centre
5. Separate accounts for foreign exchange earnings of the two parts of the country under the control of the respective Governments
6. The setting up of a militia or para military force for East Pakistan [104]

The meeting in which Sheikh Mujibur Rehman placed this plan failed to arrive at any understanding because West Pakistan s leadership refused to support the e demands

The Government controlled Press in West Pakistan launched an anti Indian and pro-Chinese propaganda campaign America was accused of encouraging political elements in East Pakistan to demand secession of the province to become an independent country under the protection of the USA Chinese leaders visited Pakistan in 1964 On February 23 1964 a joint communique was issued in which the Chinese leaders supported Pakistani views on Kashmir [105] In March 1965 President Ayub visited China A joint communique issued at the conclusion of his visit was definitely an anti Indian and anti American document [106]

In April 1965 Pakistan attacked Indian border posts in the Rann of Kutch Pakistani armies used American Patton tanks in this region Neither the USA nor the U K condemned this aggression The British Prime Minister Harold Wilson entered the scene and persuaded the Indian Government to accept the principle of arbitration. It is suspected that this proposal was put forward to make it a precedent in regard to the Kashmir question The Kutch agreement signed by India and Pakistan on June 30 1965 stated that an international tribunal would be set up and the two countries would abide by its verdict

While the Indian Government was busy in conducting negotiations for implementation of this agreement Pakistan was preparing for aggression against India in Kashmir According to Tariq Ali the political situation in Pakistan had deteriorated to such an extent and the contradictions of

the regime were such that it could not bring off the economic miracle that was needed to restore confidence so there had to be a major diversion It was decided to focus attention once again on the people of Kashmir [107]

Having suffered heavy losses in this war Pakistan failed to grab Kashmir If the war had continued for another few days Pakistan would have faced sever economic crisis which would have led to a mass upheaval Ayub was in an extremely nervous state throughout the war [108]

The United States and the Soviet Union intervened to stop the war On January 10 1966 Indian and Pakistani leaders signed the historic Tashkent Agreement As a foreign author points out For all practical purposes Pakistan lost the conflict clearly Ayub was compelled by the military situation to accept India s insistence upon restoring the *status quo ante* with only a minimum face-saving provision in the U N Resolution for some future consideration of the problems for which the Dictator had embarked on aggression [108a]

It is clear that Ayub Khan launched this aggression to silence his opponents and to overcome the increasing restlessness in Pakistan There is some evidence writes Russel Brines that Ayub revived anti Indian propaganda in an attempt to create cohesiveness just as Jinnah and his immediate successors invoked the fear of Hindu aggression for the same purpose [108b] Miss Fatima Jinnah emphasised this point Today in Pakistan he said in a message published in *The Dawn* of April 13 1965 we are passing through a critical time There is a lot of talk of economic development but the impact of such development is nowhere perceptible People are groaning under the heavy load of poverty The propaganda machinery will never succeed in brain washing carried out by the self imposed rulers One can not but express anxiety at the manner in which the people s voice has been throttled under the banners and bayonet

Ayub Khan knew that the Bengalis were simmering over a number of accumulated grievances Russel Brines

points out They (the Bengalis) contended in essence that East Pakistan despite its size was *dominated by the West* and treated as an economic step child Many insisted that the military revolution which changed Pakistan s history *was actually launched because West Pakistani generals* feared that they would come under Bengali rule The revolt frustrated the nation s first scheduled general elections which the Easterners contend would have elected a parliament dominated by Bengalis Throughout the years the nation s Government has been drawn primarily from West Pakistan as have the armed forces and industry is owned largely by Westerners The Easterners further complain that while their jute produced most of Pakistan s foreign exchange the Government spent a disproportionate share of the proceeds in the West Finally the easterners regarded themselves inadequately defended from encircling India [109]

A Bengali journal complained East Pakistan has been earning two thirds of the country s foreign exchange *and if the Central rulers have a mind to play fair with the* eastern wing they would have spent the foreign exchange earned by this region on its industrialisation A former Chief Minister of East Pakistan said

> Today there is a disparity not only in the economic sphere but also in the administrative services in executive power and in the legislative field because any legislation is subject to the veto of the President The East Pakistanis are not anybody s chicken feed and do not intend to be Policy making in many spheres is being laid down without the opinion and interests of this province being consciously and strongly kept in view [110]

On July 20 1965 the *Pakistan Times* of Lahore wrote The exploitation of East Pakistan by West Pakistan can be judged by the fact that one can see *West Pakistani officials* in every village of East Pakistan

Instead of doing justice to the people of East Pakistan the Dictator wanted to embark upon reviving the glories of Islam by launching aggression against India He promised

to secure Kashmir for Pakistan but the Bengalis made no secret of their lukewarm interest in Kashmir[111] Fear of India served more to increase the divisiveness than to cement the two wings for it intensified the Bengali sense of insecurity and inaccessibility [11] East Pakistan was saved from the destructions of war not by the Pakistani Army but because of India s decision not to attack it Throughout this war All India Radio kept on emphasising the fact that India regarded the people of East Pakistan as her friends It was this which brought home to many East Pakistanis the danger of their geographical situation and further increased their political consciousness [114] During the war a clandestine radio station calling itself 'The Voice of Independent Bengal kept on appealing to the East Pakistanis to fight for their own liberation

The announcement of the Tashkent Agreement was greeted with violent demonstrations in West Pakistan.[113]

The police had to fire on violent crowds at Lahore and Multan.[11] The President in a broadcast, said in anger Some mischievous persons taking advantage of the present situation were misleading the people [116]

He decided to find a scapegoat While he forced Bhutto to resign from the Cabinet he retired or dismissed eleven Generals and thirtynine Colonel All these elements now joined hands to blame Ayub Khan for Pakistan s debacle They decided to struggle for his dethronment.

While the Dictator s opponents in West Pakistan demanded repudiation of the Tashkent Agreement the political leaders in East Pakistan decided to start an organised struggle for autonomy *The Economist* wrote

In mid February while West Pakistan s opposition was still trying to hammer out a common line against the Tashkent Agreement an East Pakistani leader Sheikh Mujibur Rehman crying nuts to his west wing colleagues came out with his own for more explosive programme The heart of his six demands was a federal constitution that would give the federal Government control of nothing but foreign

affairs and defence and even then the two federating States should be entitled to raise their own Territorials and make their own agreements of foreign trade[117]

The press in West Pakistan condemned these demands President Ayub Khan in a speech at Rajshahi on March 16 warned the leaders of the Awami League thus

> The so called six point programme of the Awami League aims at achieving the demand for a Greater Bengal which means that East Pakistan and West Bengal would combine to form an independent State. This is bound to result in East Pakistan s Muslims being enslaved by caste Hindus of West Bengal[119]

The President also threatened that if necessary the language of weapon would have to be used and the country might have to go through a civil war as the United States did[119] While dubbing his Bengali opponents as traitors the President said Civil war is a dangerous thing But if a *nation faced disruption it has to be accepted*[120] *The Pakistan Observer* retorted Stability cannot be ensured by calling in question the patriotism of a large section of our people belonging to a particular region[121]

The Awami League leader *Sheikh Mujibur Rehman* in a public meeting held on March 20 called upon the people of East Pakistan to prepare for a strong democratic movement He aid Why East Pakistan could not be helped at the national crisis in September last? How was it that Bhutto came out with a statement that East Pakistan was saved because of China? We are not going to live on the mercy of foreign powers East and West Pakistan must be self sufficient in defence[1]

Sheikh Mujibur Rehman met the President by invitation and appealed to him to give regional autonomy to East Pakistan and to make it elf sufficient in defence[1 3] This demand for an independent defence capability for East Pakistan was a challenge to President Ayub Khan The Sheikh repeated this demand in a public meeting held in the fir t week of April at Khulna While he was returning to

out the army in Faridpur and Jessore Infuriated mobs attacked police stations jails and Government offices

After about 21 months of detention on January 18 1968 at 1 o clock Mujibur Rehman was released from detention However as soon as he came out of the jail gate army men pounced on him He was brought to Dacca Cantonment and kept in solitary confinement He was subjected to inhuman mental torture He was charged with conspiring to topple the Government and to turn East Pakistan into an independent country with the help of Indian money A number of Bengali army officers arrested in this connection were accused of co operating with Sheikh Mujibur Rehman for this object This case came to be known as the Agartala Conspiracy Case

The imprisonmen of Sheikh Mujibur Rehman did little to curb the aspirations of East Pakistan The Awami League and the National Awami Party decided on July 29 1966 to launch a massive movement to demand autonomy for East Pakistan On July 31 six opposition parties namely the Awami League the National Awami Party the Council Muslim League the Nizam e Islam and the National Demo cratic Front decided to form a committee to launch a campaign for the restoration of parliamentary democracy Sensing danger to his regime President Ayub Khan rushed to Dacca In a speech in Dacca he threatened to use other methods to put a stop to the activities of the disruptionists[1] He said Those who talk of secession are not the friends of East Pakistan Let me warn you that there is a growing frustration in West Pakistan that in spite of their sacrifices the East Pakistanis are not satisfied This is a dangerous feeling[16]

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto extend his hand of friendship to the people of Bengal He arrived in Dacca on November 15 1966 He demanded the release of Sheikh Mujibur Rehman and his colleagues He was warmly greeted by the Awami workers President Ayub Khan on the other hand was received with black flags by Bengali students in London The

demonstrators were carrying playcards containing slogans such as We demand full autonomy for East Pakistan and Release Sheikh Mujibur Rehman and his colleagues

In December 1966 the President again visited East Pakistan On the conclusion of his seven-day visit he issued a statement saying I am sorry to say that I still hear voices demanding change in the very basis of the prevailing system If the people developed the habit of change day in and day out the country will not be able to forge ahead [17]

The President was also facing troubles in West Pakistan. He was becoming more and more unpopular since the Tashkent Agreement and the repression which had followed it

The widows of those killed in the war led a procession in Lahore Chanting "Give us back our husbands they marched to the Governor s House where they returned their husbands medals [18] The police opened fire upon these women wounding four of them

Things were getting worse for the President. He dismissed the Governor of West Pakistan the Nawab of Kala Bagh because he was perturbed on account of the Nawab s increasing power On November 19 1966 the *Daily Telegraph* of London revealed what it termed as a dangerous plot to topple Ayub Khan s regime According to this report a Nawab had formed a secret Council of Generals to depose Ayub and capture the administration The correspondent further disclosed that 11 General and 29 Colonels were dismissed not on account of any inability as was claimed In fact they disliked Ayub s policies which had resulted in procurment of Chinese arms on a large scale

In the last week of November 1966 a section of the Indian and foreign Press published lengthy reports about the scandals of Industries owned by the President s son Gohar Ayub and his father in law Major General Habibur Rehman It was revealed that this firm was started with a loan of Rs 60 lakhs from the State Bank without any security It succeeded in acquiring the proprietorship of dozens of Pakistani and foreign firms including that of General Motors Company of

America. Within a few years they had become millionaires. It was further revealed that Gohar Ayub was trying to transfer assets of this firm to Switzerland because of the fear of impending danger to his father's regime.[129]

In the beginning of the year 1967 more than seventy prominent politicians who were debarred from taking part in political activities and condemned as corrupt and opportunist resumed political activities. One of them, Ayub Khuhro, a former Chief Minister of Sind, joined the ruling Muslim League. It may be recalled that Ayub Khan's Government had got him convicted on a charge of black marketing, but now Ayub Khan needed support from such like persons to strengthen his own position. The former Chief Minister of Punjab Mian Mumtaz Daultana and former Prime Minister Chaudhuri Mohammad Ali joined hands with the East Pakistani leaders Attaur Rehman, Nurul Amin and Abu Hassan Sarkar. The former Governor of East Pakistan General Azam Khan supported the demand for revival of the democratic set up.

Alarmed by this situation the President again visited East Pakistan. On March 28, 1967 he addressed a meeting of the Dacca Bar Association. He said that he was not prepared to restore parliamentary democracy because it was against the fundamental principles of Islam.

He rejected the demand for internal autonomy and said East Pakistan already enjoyed enough internal autonomy.[130]

A pamphlet written by one Manzur Alam was distributed in the meeting in which it was said that "God created Pakistan and Ayub saved it".[131] On April 3 he said that the demand for autonomy was a "camouflage for separation".[132]

In the meantime Bhutto had started openly attacking the dictatorship. He challenged Home Minister Khwaja Shahabuddin and Information Minister Sayed Ahmed to join him in open debate on this issue. He criticised the Tashkent Agreement and condemned it as a document of betrayal. He threatened to reveal what he called "secret talks" preceding the signing of the document. Ayub Khuhro

defended Ayub Khan and demanded prosecution of Bhutto and his associates On March 17 1967 Khwaja Shahabuddin said I have come to know that Bhutto has criticised the Army s role in the war of 1965

In March 1968 Ayub suffered a serious stroke The fact was kept ecret but somehow rumours that he was dead swept the country His illness was erious enough to confine him to bed for several weeks It raised the inconvenient question of succession in the public mind On May 2 1968 *The Times* (London) reported that President Ayub had been advised to lead a less vigorous life In July 1968 he went to London for a medical check up Bhutto followed him Pakistani students staged a demonstration against Ayub Khan. Bhutto condemned Ayub Khan s regime and supported the de mand for self-government for East Pakistan The Public con troversy about the Presidents illness was still going on The former Chief Minister of East Pakistan Nurul Amin declared that Pakistan s Constitution had broken down during Ayub Khan s illness due to his inability to attend to the duties of his office Former Air Marshal A ghar Khan joined this controversy It was said that as the President did not appoint the Speaker of the Constituent Assembly as Acting Head of State the Government of the time was unconstitutional It was said that both Yahya Khan and Asghar Khan aspired for this post This might have disturbed the mind of the President

In the meantime Bhutto formed the Peoples Party of Pakistan to launch a struggle for the restoration of democracy and working for an Islamic Socialist State [133] Government s hired goondas disturbed Bhutto s public meetings in Lahore and eLewhere West Pakistan s Home Minister threatened to prosecute Bhutto on a charge of misappropriation of Public funds when he had held office as a Central Minister Bhutto on the other hand levelled serious charges of corruption against a number of Central Ministers He exploited anti-Indian entiments to his own advantage In October 1968 he distributed a booklet in which he advocated annexation of the whole of Kashmir and Assam [134]

In September 1968 the President visited Dacca. He was greeted with violent demonstrations. Again he threatened his opponents and declared that any change in the electoral system would bring disaster to the country.

President Ayub Khan was facing serious troubles in Baluchistan, Sind and occupied Kashmir. In Baluchistan a guerilla war was being fought between the supporters and opponents of the Government. As usual Ayub Khan deployed army detachments to crush his opponents. A number of violent encounters between the army and the tribesmen took place in October and November. According to reports published in Kabul at least 70 Pakistani soldiers were killed in two ambushes in the hills of Baluchistan. More than 5000 Pakistani soldiers moved into the trobuled areas and the Pakistan Air Force attacked the rebel hide out. The Baluchis complained of having been reduced to the status of second-class citizens like the Bengalis. They resented Punjabi domination. The Baluch National Awami Party demanded a plebiscite under Afro Asian supervision to determine the will of the people.

The anti Punjabi sentiment had been brewing for a long time. It was alleged that since the severance of trade ties with Afghanistan Punjabi businessmen had almost pushed out the Pathans in the fresh and dry fruit trade. A large police force from the Punjab was called to suppress the Baluchi nationalist. A violent riot broke out in Quetta. The administration had to be handed over to the Army and a 24 hour curfew was imposed. According to a conservative estimate at least a hundred people lost their lives.[15] The National Awami Party of Sind announced its support to the "Jai Sind" movement sponsored by Sindhi writers and intellectuals. In the NWFP the National Awami Party led by Khan Abdul Wali Khan declared its intention to launch a struggle for the establishment of Pakhtunistan. In occupied Kashmir an Act was enforced to "re-elect" Ayub's henchman Sardar Abdul Hamid to the office of President. This Act [illegible] Chief Adviser of the "Azad

Kashmir Government to appoint any person of his choice in his place at his own sweet will A wave of indignation swept over Azad Kashmir as a result of the enforcement of this Act [131]

Mr Bhutto s open indictment of Ayub encouraged other opposition leaders to attack the dictatorship Ayub Khan members of his family and big industrialists who supported him were made targets of this attack It was openly said that Ayub Khan s sons Captain Gohar Ayub, Shaukat Ayub and Tahir Ayub had acquired big industries that Ayub had bought a farm in Sardinia (Italy) for better days and had a large bank balance in Geneva acquired through a Jewish arms dealer who sold arms to the Pakistan Government at double his usual price and put the balance into Ayub s bank account It was further said that Ayub s daughter Nasim who married into the Swat Royal Family indulged opium smuggling into Afghanistan [138] Secret files lying with the anti smuggling department disclosed that Ayub Khan was an active partner with the notorious smuggler Kasim Bhatti [139] In the meantime Dr Mahbubul Huq, Chief Economist of the Planning Commission made startling disclosures about twenty one families who controlled the wealth of the country He revealed that sixty per cent of the industrial capital was in the hands of these families who also controlled over 80 per cent of the country s banking and 97 per cent of the country s insurance business Ayub s family was one of those twenty one families

An insignificant incidence that took place on November 6 created such an explosive situation that it finally led to the down fall of Ayub Khan. In the dusty Khyber Pass township of Jamrud in North-West Pakistan a group of seventy students was challaned by Customs Officers on charge of smuggling goods they had bought in the duty-free market of Landikotal The students claimed they were insulted hit and held by the Customs men Returning to Rawalpindi they heard Bhutto was in town and decided to take their grievance to him Already the atmosphere in Rawalpindi was surcharged with tension because the

students of the Polytechnic Institute were agitating for their demands On November 7 1968 the students held a very big demonstration in which anti Ayub slogans were raised They stopped every official car removed the flag and forced the occupants to raise anti Ayub slogan When the Deputy Commissioner spoke to them in a threatening tone the students tore off his trousers and sparked him

The students marched towards the city s luxurious Intercontinental Hotel where Bhutto was staying but the police stopped them A student leader who forced his way in was dragged out and beaten up in front of the guests The students regrouped and were lathi charged by the police *Then the police started firing on them as a result of which* a first-year student Abdul Hamid died on the spot Enraged the students fought back with bricks and there were casualties on both side. On their way back the students attacked and burnt a number of vehicles of the Government Transport Service The Government prohibited the holding of public meetings and demonstrations but the next day more than twenty thousand students defied the ban burnt Ayub Khan s portraits every shop front displaying a photograph of the dictator was smashed and within a *few hours not a single* photograph could be seen in the main centres of the city Occupants of private and official cars were forced to get out and shout anti Ayub slogans or kicked in the arse if they refused [140] The students were joined by the members of the general public who demanded the end of the dictatorship and restoration of parliamentary democracy They attacked banks factories and big business houses The city was completely out of control and the administration paralysed *The Government took strong measures* to crush the movement but within a week it spread all over the country Undoubtedly it was a revolt Despite the fact that several students were interned the revolt could not be suppressed In Lahore Peshawar Hyderabad Karachi Gujar Khan and Dacca the students clashed with the police The Government closed all the colleges universities and schools but the

students continued defying the prohibitory orders and they were joined by a growing number of workers unemployed young men and others Suddenly the lid was off After 10 years of fascist rule the people turned their fury on Ayub Khan in riots and endless demonstrations

The students were angry over poor educational conditions, large clas es lack of facilities and high fees But now they also demanded political freedom and protested against the prevailing corruption and exploitation The politicians got on the bandwagon calling for free elections and return to democracy Everywhere the students and the common men took to the streets in a heady protest against Ayub Khan and his regime

On November 10 Ayub Khan was scheduled to address a public meeting in Peshawar the stronghold of the National Awami Party led by Wali Khan Earlier the NAP had organised a big demonstration there and for the fir t time in the history of the NWFP thousands of Pathan women participated in the rally Ayub Khan probably wanted to demonstrate his own strength Nawabzada Abdul Ghafoor Khan of Hoti a big sugar magnate and Minister of Civil Supplies in the Central Government accompanied him As soon as the latter appeared on the stage to read an address of welcome to the President the audience started raising slogans such as dismiss the sugar thief As soon as Ayub Khan rose a young Pathan student Hasham Khan stood up and fired two shots at him The result was pandemonium Ayub hid behind the sofa on the platform while one of his sons threw himself on top of him The student was arrested but for a long time Ayub stayed crouching behind the ofa He left the meeting utterly shattered and shaken under a strong military escort Later on Hashim told the police that he was sorry he had not succeeded in killing the tyrant who had oppressed the people so long [141]

In a bid to nip the growing movement in the bud Ayub Khan s Government hauled Mr Bhutto off to Jail along with dozens of student leaders for disrupting peace and spreading

lawlessness Wali Khan of NAP and a number of other Pathans and Baluch leaders were also arrested on the same charge [112]

Four days later in a luxury hotel in Lahore Air Marshal Asghar Khan a former Commander in Chief of the Air Force joined the revolt The ex Chief Justice of the High Court Murshad Hussain General Azam Khan and Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan followed him to join active politics In a letter addressed to the Cabinet Secretary Mr M H Sufi the former Commander of the Air Force said he had done so as a token of my disgust and disapproval of the uncivilised conduct of the Government He criticised the reign of terror on students and urged that the Government should adopt civilised manners [113]

The Government dismissed the agitating politicians as a gang of goondas But the riots increased and reached peak with nationwide strikes Mobs took over the streets attacking police-stations

In the third week of November the *Daily Telegraph* of London created a sensation by revealing the existence of a strong opposition against Ayub Khan in his army The paper wrote President Ayub Khan is today confonted with the most serious challenge to his authority since his advent to power ten years ago The anti Government movement has emerged within Pakistan s military hierarchy and President Ayub can no longer rely on the unquestioning support of the armed forces who have hitherto been the ultimate sanction on which his dictatorship has rested Air Marshal Asghar Khan s decision to support the opposition has caused a major sensation There is a speculation that he may join Bhutto s party [114]

At a time when the revolt was spreading and the atmos phere was ringing with slogans like death to dictator the Central Minister for Information Khwaja Shahabuddin said at a meeting that the people of Pakistan were enjoying full democracy like those of any democratic country in the world [115] On the other hand the Governor of West Pakis-

tan General Musa in a radio broadcast *threatened to take* severe action against the supporters of the ring leaders of the movement of lawles ness[146]

On November 29 1968 there were large- cale demonstrations and student police battles throughout West Pakistan In Peshawar *students attacked the* U S I S Library In Bahawalpur the office of Ayub s Muslim League was attacked and burnt In Rawalpindi the entire population came out on to the streets to link arms with the students[147] Clashes continued for over six hours *At least two police-stations* were set on fire The army was called out to patrol the railway station and some of the main lines?[148]

The people of East Bengal could not remain silent spectators to the students revolt in West Pakistan The province which was treated by Ayub Khan as a colony of West Pakistan had been on the boil for a long time Since the establishment of Ayub Khan s dictatorship in 1958 the Bengali people had been virtually disenfranchi ed and the masses were suffering from political repression and economic exploitation from the thugs of West Pakistan who were bent on keeping them under the worst type of subjugation in the name of Islam and solidarity of Pakistan The Bengali students and workers had been the first to rise against the military regime but they had been crushed and nobody in West Pakistan expressed any sympathy for them Their leaders were being dubbed as traitors and the West Pakistani Press hailed these accusations This had caused a sense of frustration When the students revolted in Rawalpindi the students in East Pakistan did not take it seriously Later on the situation changed and Bengali students and their political leaders started serious discussions to fall in line with their compatriots in West Pakistan Towards the end of November 1965 a group of students murdered one Saeedur Rahman who *in order to terrorise the nationalist students* of Dacca University had organised the so called National Students Federation This organisation was financed by Governor Monem Khan s administration This incident shattered th

reactionary elements and created confidence among the students opposed to the dictatorship [148a] On December 6 1965 Maulana Bhashani addressed a big public meeting attended by thousands of students and workers He demanded provincial autonomy and declared that the people would not be able to achieve justice without a mass movement He gave a call for a general strike in Dacca for the following day In an attempt to stop the strike the Government promulgated Section 144 but the students and workers defied the ban The police and the East Pakistan Rifles opened fire several times A twenty eight years old worker Abdul Mujid died and more than twenty persons were wounded The same afternoon Maulana Bhashani addressed another public meeting and called for another general strike the following day and led a big demonstration outside the Government House His indictment of the regime was unambiguous and he called upon the people to wage a relentless struggle against oppression—political and economic [149] He called for a province wide general strike on December 19 1968 It was in reality the climax of a movement which had started in 1948 and it burst throughout the province like a river in spate Ayub chose this particular moment to visit Dacca to cheer his henchmen His visit was marked by hostile demonstrations and a general strike While the demonstrators were asking for a free ballot they were answered by police bullets At least 1000 persons throughout East Pakistan were arrested There were clashes between the police and the demonstrators throughout the province The police resorted to firing in Chittagong killing one and wounding more than twelve persons [150] Ayub left Dacca as he had come skulking like a whipped dog [151] It is interesting to know that on the same day Air Marshal Asghar Khan was enthusiastically welcomed in Dacca Addressing workers of the opposition parties he warned "Any possible use of the Armed Forces to crush the agitation against the Government would create serious consequences He urged the Armed Forces not to take more interest in politics than necessary [152]

Asghar Khan met Maulana Bhashani On his return from East Pakistan Asghar Khan declared that the people of East Pakistan were real Pakistanis and they were very close to the West

He pleaded for the formation of a united front in the coming presidential elections [153]

The Amir of Jamaat Islami supported this proposal

Meanwhile in Rawalpindi a journalist Naeem Shahid was shot and seriously wounded by Sher Bahadur a notorious goonda and a known supporter of Ayub Khan s regime In protest the entire journalists went on a national strike on December 10 1968 In addition to this incident a particular target of their protest was the recently promulgated Press and Publications Ordinance that had vested powers in the Executive to force any nawspaper to submit its material for pre censorship This Ordinance also gave authority to District Magistrates to detain editors and others connected with the profession under the Defence of Pakistan Rules if in their opinion the writings were found to be objectionable [154]

In East Pakistan Maulana Bhashani organised peasants demonstrations on December 29 1968 to observe a Peasants Demand Day

In the meantime opposition parties were struggling hard to form a united front to fight the forthcoming elections A section of the Awami League led by Nawabzada Nasrullah of Lahore left Sheikh Mujibur Rehman s Awami League to form a splinter group This together with the Council Muslim League Jammat Islami Nizam-i Islami Party and the National Democratic Front joined together to form the Pakistan Democratic Movement The Awami League of Sheikh Mujibur Rehman the National Awami Party led by Maulana Bhashani and the pro Moscow National Awami Party led by Khan Wali Khan did not join this new Front Similarly Bhutto s People s Party decided to maintain its separate entity In January 1969 the leaders of the P D M from West Pakistan came to Dacca to conduct negotiations The Awami League and the pro-Moscow Wing of the N A P.

decided to join them in opposition to Ayub The new united group was named the Democratic Action Committee (D A C)

Despite fundamental differences in their outlook the member-parties of the D A C agreed on a minimum programme that comprised the demand for a federal and parliamentary form of government adult franchise release of all political prisoners including Mujibur Rehman Bhutto Wali Khan and Khan Abdus Samad Khan

President Ayub Khan still was not in a mood to concede the peoples demands On December 30 1968 while addressing the representatives of the ruling Muslim League he said Public demonstrations will never succeed in toppling my Government and I warn the opposition that the collapse of the present political system will lead to civil war [155]

The students of Dacca formed an Action Committee and decided to join the other opposition forces in the country and observed January 17 1969 as a Demands Day A Charter of Demands issued by the Action Committee contained 21 demands including the repeal of the University Ordinance restoration of parliamentary democracy on the basis of adult *franchise the establishment of a Federal structure with the* Federal Government to control only defence and currency establishment of a sub-federation consisting of Baluchistan *NWFP and Sind on the basis of internal autonomy to each* unit nationalisation of the banking insurance and other big industries withdrawal from CENTO SEATO and the American Military Bloc and release of all political prisoners and detenus [156]

The intensity of the people's struggle began to worry the Dictator From January 17 1969 ownwards the movement against the Dictator continued to gather momentum and fierce street battles had become the order of the day On January 21 twenty persons were injured in Dacca and Rawalpindi following firing by the police on student demonstrations against the Ayub regime [157]

The Times of India remarked "The political situation is gradually getting out of hand. The prorogation of the

Provincial Assembly in the wake of uproarious scenes in the House has now been followed by street battles in Dacca and other places Dissatisfaction has spread to the police force and the Government has had to rely increasingly on the para military East Pakistan Rifles for the maintenance of order

The paper added

Attempts are under way to forge closer understanding between Opposition groups in the two wings of Pakistan. For the first time top West Pakistani leaders like Air Marshal Asghar Khan have come out openly in support of autonomy for East Pakistan In a recent speech the latter asked the people of West Pakistan not to misconstrue the struggle in the eastern wing as a prelude to secession East Pakistani leaders also seem to be anxious to impress their counterparts in the western wing that they are not itching for separation According to Sheikh Mujibur Rehman the principal accused in the so called Agartala conspiracy case he is asking for maximum autonomy only to safeguard the territorial integrity of Pakistan His basic demands as outlined in his book Friends Not Foes are that the eastern wing should have a separate defence organisation and its own currency [13]

While the People s Party announced its decision to put up Bhutto as its candidate for the Presidential election the D A C decided to boycott the election as it had come to the firm conclusion that it would be a rigged poll The D A C decided to launch a campaign on February 12 in support of its demands

On January 30, Major General M S Jilani announced his decision to enter politics He expressed the hope that more retired generals would come forward to join the Common mans struggle He said wisdom and statesmanship demanded that a dialogue be held with true representatives of the people lest bloody events of the French and Russian Revolutions overtake us [19]

Ayub Khan was still determined to crush his opponents While his police was firing at demonstrators in both wings of Pakistan his son Gohar Ayub utilised goondas to terrorise his opponents in Karachi His close friend Mirza Shamsi opened fire on a crowd The demonstrators attacked and set fire to more than a dozen business centres More than 500 shops and 200 houses were burnt. The Army was called out in the Liaqatabad and Golimar areas of Karachi After day-long clashes the police made over 700 arrests Frenzied mobs burnt alive two supporters of the regime The Niwai Waqt reported that in Lahore the police resorted to inhuman treatment of young men who had participated in anti Ayub demonstrations They were made naked and beaten in front of women. In Rawalpindi a girl student Shamim Ghazala told a big audience that the Inspector General of Police had tried to molest her [160]

Ayub Khan resorted to another trick. He threatened to raise the Kashmir issue in the U N Security Council if India did not agree to what he called meaningful talks on Kashmir Simultaneously he instigated Pak-trained Mizos to cross into Tripura and attack India s Central Reserve Police posts However they were repulsed with heavy casualties [161] The Dictator failed to divert public attention from its movement The popular movement against the regime continued unabated In Lahore Karachi and Rawalpindi students stopped cars belonging to leading officers pulled them out and forced them to shout anti Ayub slogans In Lahore the Inspector General of Police was stripped of his uniform and forced to lead the demonstrators

The situation had gone out of control On February 1 Ayub Khan made an announcement that he was prepared to meet the political leaders to discuss Pakistan s political problems In a broadcast to the nation, he said that he would not hesitate to accept decisions that were the outcome of mutual discussions on proposals which he specified should be conceived in the large interests of the people" But he qualified the invitation to apply only to responsible

opposition parties and insisted that no proposal should damage the integrity and stability of the country [162] The National Awami Party rejected this invitation and said that the people s demands were not negotiable and that there was no scope for discussion with the present regime Asghar Khan criticised Ayub Khan s statement and demanded unconditional release of all political leaders The D A C adopted a resolution to continue the struggle for the fulfilment of its eight demands which included the lifting of emergency release of all political prisoners and enforcement of democratic reforms in the country [163]

Ayub Khan flew to Dacca to preside over the meeting of the Working Committee of the Convention Muslim League He was re elected President of the League The city however observed a complete strike as a mark of resentment against his regime Striking students took out processions in Dacca and other places in East Pakistan At Tangail 60 miles south east of Dacca demonstrators attacked government buildings The police fired on them, wounding more than a dozen persons

Ayub Khan started negotiations with West Pakistani leaders of the D A C He promised to release Wali Khan and Bhutto but he was not prepared to withdraw the Agartala Conspiracy Case against Mujibur Rehman whom however he was willing to release on parole This was a clever move to create a rift among the East and West At the same time he was in regular consultations with the Army and there are reasons to believe that he was resorting to a political intrigue The Army itself was involved in the talks with some of the political leaders belonging to the reactionary groups In the first week of February according to some civil servants the Army was preparing to impose Martial Law and salvage Ayub The date had been fixed and the relevant Martial Law regulations printed but at the last minute the situation in East Pakistan forced the Army to change its mind [164]

Mr Mohammad Munir former Chief Justice of Pakistan and former Law Minister in Ayub Khan s Cabinet writing in the Pakistan Times warned that unrest in Pakistan is fast developing towards a fullscale revolution He warned that the army might have to step in if the situation deteriorated The upheaval in Pakistan he said was not the work of politicians but was caused by widespread discontent over Ayub Khan s seven year old Constitution and the indirect system of elections The National Assembly Munir proposed should be given one year s extension to evolve a new Constitution Until elections could be held under the new system the President could continue in office

Anti Ayub agitation continued unabated In Dacca more than 12 000 women defied the prohibitory orders and held demonstrations The offices of the two pro Government dailies *The Morning News* and The *Pakistan* were burnt In Lahore and Rawalpindi offices of the Daily *Kohistan* were similarly attacked and burnt[165] In the changed political situation the semi official Dawn and Mashriq turned to be the supporters of the opposition demands

On February 15 Sergent Zahural Huq a Bengali soldier arrested in connection with the so-called Agartala Conspiracy Case died from bullet wounds The authorities said that he was trying to escape but the prisoners said that he was shot dead in cold blood The news spread like wild fire in Dacca Thousands of students rushed to attack police-stations Maulana Bhashani called a condolence meeting for Feburary 16 He delivered a fiery speech ending with the call Bangla Jago agun Jalo (Bengalis awake and light the fire)[166]

Within a few minutes angry crowds started attacking and burning public property and residences of the supporters of Ayub Khan The new headquarters of the ruling Muslim League was razed to the ground. The residence of the provincial minister Nawab of Hasan Askari as well as that of the Central Information Minister Khwaja Shahabuddin was set on fire The Army had to be called out to restore

order The next day the state of emergency was withdrawn and Bhutto Wali Khan Samad Khan and other political prisoners were released However violent demonstrations continued on that day On February 18 a Professor of Rajshahi University was killed by a solider during a demonstration This enraged the people The students and workers decided to defy the curfew order Thousands of university students industrial workers and slum-dwellers held a historic demonstration They raised slogans against Army Dacca became a mass of moving people In many cases Army officers ran away to save their lives It was an open rebellion The railway workers sabotaged railway lines to hamper Army movement Many of them were shot down in cold blood It seemed that the whole city had become a battle ground Human blood was flowing everywhere and the Army was indulging in the worst kind of butchery Unarmed workers and slum-dwellers without any leadership whatsoever were defying the savagery of the colonial army A few journalists who sneaked away saw for themselves the bodies of dead workers and peasants being carried away and soldiers cleansing the streets of blood[167] According to unofficial estimates over a hundred people were killed on that fateful night

Had there been any organised revolutionary movement it would have been easy to seize power and establish a revolutionary council to wrest independence from the colonial rulers but the leaders including Maulana Bhasani had never thought over this question They were agitators and nothing more Though they claim themselves to be revolutionary leaders and exhort the people to rise against the oppressors they never thought that in the modern world revolution cannot come without the use of arms especially when the rulers have no faith in the conception of parliamentary democracy The civil administration in East Pakistan had been paralysed The people had arisen in revolt and the Army was not in a position to control the province [illegible]

the leaders had no courage to proclaim the establishment of an Independent State of East Bengal

It is said that the General Commanding Officer of the Dacca Garrison sent a very distressing report to the Commander in Chief in Islamabad Ayub is reported to have summoned the three Commanders in Chief of the armed forces He wanted to impose Martial Law throughout the country but General Yahya Khan refused point blank He had received a report from his men in Dacca which suggested that if Martial Law was imposed they might be able to contain Dacca but could not give any assurance for the rest of Pakistan The officers Yahya had consulted told him that they were not opposed to Martial Law to save the country but that it would have to be a Martial Law without Ayub Yahya advised Ayub to accept all the conditions of the political leaders of the D A C and then withdraw from politics [168]

Whatever the facts about these reports one thing was certain The situation had gone out of control The Army was not in a position to keep East Pakistan under its heel—at a time when the situation in West Pakistan had already deteriorated It is difficult to say whether Ayub Khan had now changed his mind and he was actaully prepard to restore democracy or whether he resumed political negotiations only to give time to the Army to prepare itself to take over charge of the Government It is suspected that he had decided to play a double game While he planned to weaken the opposition by joining hands with the reactionaries he was also prepared to impose Martial Law and hand over the administretion of the country to Yahya Khan

In a broadcast to the nation the Dictator indicated that he was willing to make some changes and give East Pakistan a greater share in the Government of the country He noted that the people of East Pakistan had a feeling that they did not have the same measure of participation in the Government of the country as the people of the western wing He further promised that the Contitution would be

amended in accordance with the changing needs and requirements [169]

Nobody in East Pakistan welcomed his statement On the other hand thirty-seven members of his party issued a statement blaming the East Pakistan Governor Abdul Monem Khan for the bloodshed

Violent demonstrations were still being held throughout East Pakistan In Khulna nine persons were killed in a clash with the police The Action Committee of East Pakistan students asked all Bengali members of the State as well as the National Assembly and Basic Democracies to resign In Rajshahi Mr Shamsuzoba Proctor of the University was among several persons who were killed as a result of police firing An angry crowd beat to death the Chairman of the Basic Democracy Bheramara outside his house In Khulna a 20 000 strong crowd set fire to the house of the Communications Minister Khan Sabur Three persons were killed by police firing and a policeman was beaten to death by the mob In Dacca a mob attacked the building of the US Consulate and wrecked the office of the Japan Airlines The civil administration was completely paralysed in Dacca and many other places in East Pakistan Faced with this situation Ayub Khan yielded to the opposition with the announcement on February 21 that he would not seek re-election when his term expired this year end In an unscheduled radio broadcast he said This decision is final and irrevocable He told his countrymen that they would be free to elect any person of their choice He said that Pakistan was passing through a very critical period In an obvious reference to the mounting popular opposition to his regime leading to mass demonstrations police firing and calling of the Army in various cities he said Things have reached the height of madness He said he could not tolerate that security of Pakistan should be endangered

Ayub Khan said he knew some people were dissatisfied with the present system They wanted to choose their representatives in a more direct manner on the basis of adult

franchise He also realised that the intelligentsia felt that they were no having a proper share in the administration

The people of Pakistan he admitted feel that they are not real partners in the administration and in different spheres of life Some people complain that the Assemblies are not having sufficient powers It was to remove the grievances of the people that he had called a meeting with the opposition parties and independent leaders In this critical hour he said it is our duty to find a way of the Constitutional impass and other problems He said he was trying to remove obstacles so that all political parties and leaders could participate [170]

The next day Ayub Khan announced the withdrawal of the infamous Agartala Conspiracy Case Mujibur Rehman and all the other accused in this case were released unconditionally Later on the Baluch leader Khan Abdus Samad Khan and Baghi Baluch along with the Sindhi leader G M Syed were also released. Bhutto and Wali Khan had already been released on February 11

It was the Army which brought about this change An official spokesman told Selig Harrison special correspondent of The Washington Post that the Army Chief General Yahya Khan the Air Force Chief Noor Khan and the Navy Chief Admiral S M Ahson had made unscheduled visits to Islamabad the day before Ayub announced his decision Harrison quoted informed sources as saying that the Chiefs of the armed forces were reluctant to give Ayub assurances of support if h e felt compelled to resort to Martial Law [171] According to another reliable version the President was forced to issue this statement because a powerful section of the Army had threatened to stage a coup against him [172]

On February 24 *the Financial Times* of London revealed that during the recent disturbances in Karachi junior Army officers refused to fire on the demonstrators Some of these officers were being court martialled

It is difficult to explain the motives behind Bhutto and Bhashani s refusal to attend the proposed Round Table Con-

ference It is similarly difficult to understand the violent activities of the Jammaat Islami and the supporters of Ayub Khan Bhutto demanded Ayub Khan s immediate resignation At the same time he started an anti India propaganda campaign On February 21 he told *the Financial Times* Correspondent that he would raise a people s militia to what he called resist Indian aggression He was speaking as if he was going to be nominated President of Pakistan in place of Ayub Khan He said that my Government would liberate Kashmir In order to get East Pakistan s support in the crusade for Kashmir my Government would raise the Farakka barrage question Earlier Maulana Bhashani demanded the inclusion of Assam in East Pakistan. He advocated a struggle for liberation of Assam till it became a part of Pakistan He disclo ed that he had discussed the que tion of A am in detail with Phizo the rebel Naga leader in London in 1966 The Maulana added We both wept over he fate that befell Assam after partition [173] It is not clear whether Bhutto and Bhashani had entered into a conspiracy with a powerful section of the Army leaders to forestall the establishment of the parliamentary sy tem of government or whether they were ju t indulging in cheap political stunt. However it was clear that the Army was not prepared to forgo its domment position and to be governed by the politicians Army leaders were also not prepared to allow politicians to change the social structure of the country In ca e Maulana Bhashani was not playing into the hands of these army leaders he might have thought that now was the time to establish a Communist State of Mao s conception in East Pakistan Probably the Army leaders allowed the situation to deteriorate to further their own interests It is significant to note that during the months of February and March Radio Pakistan was allowed to relay extensive reports of riots and fiery speeches of left-wing leaders including Bhutto

A British journalist writing from Rawalpindi revealed that while hints in Islamabad were dropping that the outgoing

President might even set up a national coalition of all parties for the change over after him East Pakistani students who spearheaded the movement against the regime regrouped themselves around two demands Ayub's immediate retirement and the resignation by all members of the National Assembly To destroy the system of basic democracies Ayub set up the Students Action Committee in an ultimatum issued at a relly of 100 000 students at Dacca on February 23 members of the National Assembly and the 120 000 basic democrats—the electoral college of village Council chiefs who elect the Presidents—were told to resign by March 3 or face the consequences The warning followed on systematic attacks on the property and lives of Cabinet Ministers District Commissioners and the lower hierarchy of the regime in the rural areas of East Pakistan [174a]

The ultimatum has already brought terror to the hearts of President Ayub's supporters who are now the target of mob action The first indication of the new turn in 16 weeks of revolt came last week when the Chairman of the Basic Democratics Council in Kushtia a small town in East Pakistan was beaten to death by a mob

Led by students a crowd of townsmen surrounded the victim and demanded his resignation In an attempt to save his family the Council chief fired at the mob injuring two students

Advancing on the weeping family the mob burned the house to the ground and beat the village chairman to death.

The story spread quickly and reports of the resignations of basic democrats are coming from all over the country In the arson and looting in East Pakistan last week the residences of two Cabinet Ministers and three Provincial Ministers were burnt down

Waves of Bengalis attacked isolated police stations and district outposts killing officials and unpopular police officers More than 20 students and demonstrators lost their lives in seven days

An explosive issue facing President Ayub Khan and also the opposition leaders of West Pakistan was the student demand for a new Constitution which would concede absolute autonomy to East Pakistan [174]

It may be recalled that Maulana Bhashani whose supporters indulged in lawlessness had been a staunch supporter of Ayub Khan for a number of years The Maulana claimed that he himself had brought about a close understanding between Pakistan and China In the initial stages he refused to support opposition parties against Ayub Khan but now he had changed altogether Probably he thought that now was the time to establish a communist state of Mao s conception in East Pakistan

The Round Table Conference convened by Ayub Khan was held on February 26 1969 in the midst of a rapidly deteriorating situation Mujib and Asghar Khan along with leaders of the Democratic Action Committee attended the Conference After preliminary discussions the Conference was postponed to March 10 Bhutto and Bhashani refused to attend the Conference The two leaders demanded to immediate stepdown of Ayub Khan Bhashani said on February 24 that unless the Government agreed to the demands of the Students Action Committee a countrywide civil disobedience movement would be started In addition to autonomy for East Pakistan he demanded nationalisation of industries and withdrawal from military pacts with the West

It seemed that Ayub Khan himself wanted to create chaos On the one hand his supporters attempted to organise public meetings in Rawalpindi Lahore and Sukhar and on the other Jamat Islami decided to fight against the supporters of Bhutto and Bhashani Maulana Maudoodi and Maulana Ahtshamul Haque Thanwi addressed big gatherings in Karachi Lahore and Multan condemning socialism and its supporters—Bhutto and Bhashani Thanwi said that anti-Islamic elements financed by foreign powers were raising their heads to wipe out Islam from Pakistan People would

not tolerate them but would save Pakistan at all cost[15] On March 4 followers of the Jamat Islami attacked a students procession in Lyallpur On March 7 supporters of Ayub Khan organised a procession in Rawalpindi They raised slogans against socialism It said that an armed group came out of the residence of the Muslim League leader Raja Allah Dad Khan and attacked Ayub Khan s opponents[16] In Nawab Shah supporters of Bhutto and Maudoodi clashed Jamaat Islami s followers attacked and ransacked the offices of Bhutto s People s Party and a book-stall Jamaat s followers raised slogans against Bhutto on his arrival in Bahawalpur on March 6 The latter s supporters attacked them wounding Dr Abdul Halim a worker of the Jamaat

Followers of the two groups clashed in Lahore on several occasions On March 9 Bhashani addressed a largely attended meeting in Lahore It is said that the Jamaat s supporters threw brickbats on the audience In retaliation Bhashani s followers attacked the office of the Jamaat ran sacked it and set fire to furniture and book. Maudoodi issued a statement accusing the followers of Bhashani for burning the Holy Book He announced that public meetings throughout the country would be held to condemn Bhashani Bhashani denied the allegation and said that the leaders of the Jamaat Islami had entered into a dangerous conspiracy with the Government to repeat the tragic drama of Indonesia in Pakistan. He said that he would not submit to violence He was prepared for a civil war and would retaliate with violence against violence[17] The next day of the Jamaa supporters attacked to People s Party office in Multan and ransacked a shop owned by the Secretary of the National Awami Party On March 10 the Deputy Commissioner of Mymensingh (E. Pakistan) revealed that unruly mobs burnt alive 21 persons in the Jamalpur sub-division and ransacked and burnt a number of houses.[18] The Nawai Waqt reported on March 12 that Bhashani s followers burnt 478 houses in Rajashahi (E. Pakistan) The same paper reported on March 19 that lawlessness prevailed in Pabna town in East

Pakistan where unruly elements had burnt more than 1 000 houses It was reported that 200 persons were wounded as a result of the clashes between the two groups The Army was called out to restore law and order The *Daily Kohistan* of Lahore of March 7 reported large scale evictions of non Sindhi tenants in the erstwhile province of Sind

On March 18 the Governor of East Pakistan Monem Khan left Dacca on two months leave' It was reported that a mob tried to kill him His life was saved with the help of a Hindu servant He reached Karachi on March 19 after leaving everything at Dacca

On March 11 Air Marshal Asghar Khan issued a lengthy statement accusing the Government machinery of fomenting riots to sabotage the Round Table Conference He said

> Hired goondas of the ruling party are bent upon creating trouble Large sums of money collected from big capitalists are being utilsed to foment riots Hired goondas from rural areas have been brought in Karachi and other cities These elements are responsible for trouble that broke out in Karachi [179]

The Defence Minister Vice Admiral A.R Khan refuted this allegation and aid that Asghar Khan had levelled those charges at the instance of foreign elements [180]

In the meantime the Post and Telegraph and Karachi Port employees resorted to an indefinite strike Supporters of Bhashani killed five persons in Jamalpur (E Pakistan)—two of them burned to death and one hacked to pieces The Pakistani Press reported the establishment of people s courts in rural areas of East Pakistan which tried and ordered persons accused of smuggling to be hanged A number of local officials were lynched in different places of the province [181]

Labour unrest gripped West Pakistan In Karachi Lahore Lyallpur and other places industrial trading estates cotton mills and other factories were paralysed following a rampage of looting and arson by striking workers [18]

On March 8 a UPI message revealed the existence of a near civil war situation in East Pakistan. Mobs killed two more 'suspected criminals' in Balhara village 30 miles from Dacca and burnt 40 houses In Parbatipur more than 200 houses were burnt

On March 9 the BBC reported that the opposition leaders of Pakistan would unitedly demand disintegration of West Pakistan into five units in the Round Table Conference with Ayub Khan in Rawalpindi The BBC characterised the agreement as a victory of the Awami League's case for limiting the Central Government's powers to defence and external affairs only However Bhashani and Bhutto declared their intention not to attend the Conference

There were reports of more bloodshed in East Pakistan Two students were killed in clashes with the local authorities in Jamalpur district Students had been calling on Government officials to give up their jobs and join the final struggle

Radio Pakistan reported on March 9 that the former Chief Minister of the erstwhile North West Frontier Province Abdul Qayyum Khan supported the demand to establish Pakhtunistan [183] He demanded the immediate resignation of Ayub Khan

While Bhutto and Bhashani demanded immediate resignation of Ayub Khan Sindhi leader G M Syed Pakhtun leader Wali Khan and convener of the Awami Action Committee Nasarullah Khan said that Ayub Khan should continue as President of the proposed interim Government till the next elections

On March 10 when the Round Table Conference was in session students in Lahore set fire to the main gate of the United States Information Services Library and burnt an American van parked outside In Karachi the supporters of the Jamaat Islami ransacked the office of the Associated Press of Pakistan A man was killed by being nailed to a tree and another man was burnt alive in a fresh outburst of violence in East Pakistan [184] Rioters agitating against Ayub

Khan lynched more suspects in an orgy of looting and arson.

After discussions which went on for four days Ayub Khan accepted the opposition demands for direct elections under universal adult franchise and for return to the parliamentary system [18]

Addressing the Round Table Conference on March 13 Ayub Khan noted that there was a consensus on the issues of direct elections and parliamentary form of Government The first point was specific and could be put before the National Assembly but the second was not specific enough to be incorporated in a Bill

He *said that he had only one aim before him— to estab*lish a tradition for the transfer of power in a peaceful and constitutional manner He however made no mention of a date for elections

According to the Associated Press despatch Ayub Khan told the Conference The agitation which started last November assumed menacing proportions and posed a threat to the life liberty and property of citizens and the security of the country

On his decision to step down he said *I made this announcement after deep thought in the hope that this would remove all doubts and misgivings from the minds of the Opposition leaders*

Ayub Khan said that under the 1962 Constitution a great deal of progress was made by the country in all spheres and Pakistan enjoyed political stability and a tremendous amount of prestige throughout the world

Expressing the need for caution in the days ahead he said it was proper for us to wait till the will of the people is ascertained before doing anything which in a calmer political climate might appear to amount to weakening of Pakistan

He added The prevailing law and order situation in the country should be a matter of concern to all of us Forces which have been let loose must be brought to bay A whole

educational year has been lost Demands are mounting from all sides Economic life is coming to standstill Industrial production has received a severe setback "

Significantly he warned that if this state of affairs continued respect for authority and the fabric of law would be gravely endangered.

Immediately after this announcement the East Pakistan leader Sheikh Mujibur Rehman announced his withdrawal from the Democratic Action Committee and said that his party would continue agitation for the people s demand His colleagues from East Pakistan Nurul Amin and former Chief Justice S M Murshid said that Ayub Khan had taken away with one hand what he had given with the other They said that the Conference should have solved the question of provincial autonomy The National Awami Party leader, Wali Khan while hailing Ayub Khan s acceptance of the two demands as historic said that the absence of any decision on the question of regional autonomy and the break up of one unit of West Pakistan would lead to still greater hatred and the consequences would be very serious Punjabi leaders like Daultana Mohammed Ali and Jamaat Islami s leader Maulana Maudoodi felt that Ayub Khan s announcement would help restore democracy [156]

On March 15 Radio Australia quoting an official report released in Dacca reported rioting and killing having reached new proportions in East Pakistan despite Ayub Khan s promise to restore parliamentary system in the country According to this report 167 persons including pro Government politicians had been killed and 10 000 houses burnt in the massive outbreak of violence in East Pakistan

The radio quoted news agency of mutilation and burning of pro Government citizens and looting of grain and food stores following shortages caused by the widespread disturbances which crippled the distribution system Government Councils were losing control throughout the province and were being replaced by people s courts formed by Leftist politician The report further revealed Furious crowds

have been attacking the houses of village chiefs and civil leaders Eight persons were lynched by what was described as a delirious crowd at Madaripur Their bodies were thrown into their flaming houses Two others had their throats cut Some 221 houses were reported to have been set on fire at Jamalpur and 225 at Manikganj Their inhabitants were meassacred by a raging crowd Travellers from Dacca say that the student leader T Ahmad was now known as the new governor [187]

In West Pakistan the followers of the Jamaat Islami were determined to crack down the militant left wing On March 14 the Jammat s militants clashed with leftist student groups in scattered incidents At Peshawar they clashed with the supporters of Bhashani and Bhutto Two pistol shots were fired at a public meeting In Karachi some 3 000 fanatics demonstrated against the alleged burning of the Holy Book in Lahore by left wingers In a tense atmosphere Maulana Maudoodi called the faithful to 'silence the tongue that utters the word socialism He called on the party to oust leftists from every locality [188]

The leader of the Awami League Sheikh Mujibur Rehman received a tumultuous welcome on his return to Dacca and soon after launched his first public attack on Bhashani He told a press conference that Bhashani should retire He is already 86

> Speaking to a gathering at his house in Dacca Shiekh Mujibur Rehman said that his party members in the National Assembly would support President Ayub s two proposals for direct elections on basis of adult franchise and parlimentary system of government for the country They would also put forth amendments to the Constitution in accordance with the six points of the party as also the eleven points put forward by the All-Party Students Committee according to a Radio Pakistan report

He said if all the leaders of the DAC had supported his party s demands at the RTC, President Ayub would have

been left with no other alternative but to accept the demands

The Sheikh reiterated his demand for provincial autonomy and breaking of the one unit He said the struggle for getting his party s six point programme as also students eleven point programme would continue in a peaceful and constitutional manner

On March 16 the Pakistani press reported an alleged attempt to murder Bhashani According to *Naua i Waqt* he was attacked by four young men at Sahiwal 40 kilometers east of Rawalpindi He received injuries on the hand and neck On arrival in Karachi Bhashani accused supporters *of Jamaat Islami of trying to kill him and called them* stooges of American imperialism Bhashani s supporters chanted death to Maudoodi Both Bhashani and Bhutto said they had received letters threatening them with death Bhutto said Such threats would not succeed in intimidating the Maulana and me for we are ready to give the last drop of our blood for the glory of Pakistan and poor people Bhashani told a crowd The United States and Britain are not friends of Pakistan Its true friends were China Indonesia Iran Turkey Saudi Arabia and Jordan who had helped the nation in the 1965 war with India He added that 700 had died in the four month old unrest in East Pakistan but we do not mind sacrificing two million in *order to throw off the yoke of imperialism* [189]

In order to avoid another crisis the Defence and Home Minister promised suitable measures to protect life against violence While deploring the attack on Bhashani by unknown persons he said political differences would not be allowed to be settled through violence Radio Pakistan quoted a Government statement issued in Lahore regretting the incident and saying that the Maulana was a national leader and was respected by the people [190]

On the same day three significant developments took place. Workers in West Pakistan called of a general strike on March 17 to back heir demands for higher wages and the

All Party Students Action Committee called for a general strike in East Pakistan to support its 11-point demand. Ayub Khan removed General Mohammed Musa from the Governorship of the West Pakistan and appointed Yusuf Haroon a big industrialist in his place On March 21 Ayub Khan appointed M N Huda Governor of East Pakistan.

Simultaneously with the appointment of the new Governor of West Pakistan the PTI reported the news of *troop movements from West Pakistan to East Pakistan in a bid to suppress the people s revolt there* [191]

On March 22 three persons were killed and four wounded by gun shots in a clash that took place in Karachi between supporters and opponents of Ayub Khan Radio Pakistan reported that the situation in East Pakistan was alarmingly serious In an Urdu broadcast the Radio said The disturbances especially in East Pakistan are dealing a serious blow to the economy of the country In both the wings of Pakistan it has taken the shape of an epidemic which has greatly harmed the country The Radio quoted an opposition leader as saying that some people had started transferring their accounts to foreign countries [192]

Meanwhile Sheikh Mujibur Rehman addressing a huge rally at Adamjinagar (Dacca) said that he would continue the movement for full autonomy to East Pakistan On the other hand Bhashani told his followers that the United States had spent Rs 70 crores in one month in hiring anti social elements to sabotage the people s movement in Pakistan He claimed to have positive proof of this According to reports released by the French News Agency (AFP) Bhashani threatened to take over all mills if workers demands including free education free medical aid accommodation city allowance and minimum salary of Rs. 150 a month were not met within two months

The US Embassy in Rawalpindi refuted Bhashani s allegations and said such charges had absolutely no basis in fact and were totally irresponsible. On March 24 the State Department s officials said in Washington that the U

Ambassador in Pakistan had been authorised to evacuate Americans living in East Pakistan *if they are endangered* by growing mob violence

The B B C reported total collapse of law and order in East Pakistan and said that the situation there was developing into an Indonesian type of struggle between Communism and Islam and the people of that province had made the supporters of Ayub Khan their targets of violence

On March 25 when the New Governors of West and East Pakistan were going to call opposition leaders for consultation Radio Pakistan annonced that Pakistan s soldier-President Field Marshal Mohammed Ayub Knan 61 stepped down and handed over power to the Army Commandar in Chief General Yayha Khan

The 52 year old General immediately pro laimed martial law throughout the country

Assuming charge as the Chief Mart al Law Administrator Gen Yahya Khan ordered the dissolution of the National and Provincial Assemblies and placed the two wings of the country under the charge of two Administrators—Lt Gen Mohammed Atiqur Rahman for West Pakistan and Maj Gen Muzaffaruddin for the Eastern province

Ayub Khan who announced the handing over of power to the military in the unscheduled broadcast later relinquished charge and proceeded on three months leave [193]

Although people were told that Ayub Khan would stay at the Presidents s Hou e in Rawalpindi General Yahya Khan aboli hed the off ce of President and di olved the Central and Provincial Cabinets

History repeated itself on March 31 when General Yahya Khan the Chief Martial Law Administrator appointed himself Pre ident but there was one difference After being made Martial Law Administrator Gen. Ayub Khan had waited for nineteen days before he overthrew President Iskander Mirza and assumed the Presidency Gen Yahya Khan waited for six days only

Three days after the bloodless coup of October 1958 Gen Ayub Khan had said He (Mirza) had vague ideas I have definite ideas I say that what we are practising is also democracy

When Gen Ayub Khan handed over power to Gen Yahya Khan Radio Pakistan had reported that the President was going on three months leave but now it was made clear that he had resigned on March 25 Dejected and sad he left Rawalpindi to settle in Swat a small township 30 miles north of Rawalpindi Two of his daughters lived there who were married in the family of the ruler of Swat

Earlier, on March 31 Vice Admiral Syed Mohammed Ahsan Pakistan s No 2 Martial Law Administrator said in Washington that the new Government would be caretaker and guardian for a very short time with hopes of holding Presidential elections in January next He said

Our aim is to provide the necessary environment for the framing of a new Constitution as early as possible and for the transfer of power to the elected representatives of the people [194]

Under the caption Ayub Goes *The Indian Express* said President Ayub Khan s decision to hand over power to the armed forces is his parting kick to the politicians who after having compelled him to agree to the restoration of parliamentary democracy were demanding his immedia-- resignation and the formation of a National Governme *The despatch of two shiploads of tanks to East Pakist some days ago suggests that the desicion to impose mart law throughout the country might have been taken at tl time though the appointment of new Governors in West a East Pakistan within the last few days would give i impression that it is a sudden decision forced by the sprea ing wave of violence which the civil authorities were not able to control* What has happened is not progress towards democracy but a throw-back to 1958 when the then Government was dismissed and General Ayub Khan assumed power as Martial Law Administrator

The Hindustan Times wrote "There can be no two opinions that the Army itself has stepped in at an unpropitious moment. In 1958 *it entered the political arena as a* saviour to create a political revolution. Today it has little popular backing and has intervened to arrest a revolution."

Under the caption "No cure", *The Times of India* pointed out: "There is no point in looking for a parallel between the circumstances in which President Ayub Khan seized power in 1958 and those in which he has been forced to relinquish it. The situation today is altogether far more difficult and far more explosive. As in 1958 martial law has been proclaimed throughout the country. But unlike then not many today look upon the armed forces as saviours. *The imposition of martial law which will be largely administered by men belonging to West Pakistan will not only be palliative but further accentuate the feeling of alienation in East Pakistan. The fissures in the body politic of the country can no longer be washed away. Nor can a strong Centre be built so long as one half of the country is not prepared to concede its rightful due to the other.* The most ominous symptom of the malaise that has overtaken Pakistan is not the breakdown of law and order but the unwillingness of any party in West Pakistan, however

since the East contributes 60 per cent of a defence budget only 10 per cent of which is spent in the area General Yahya s first need will be to enlist the support of as many politicians as he can while neutralising the rest. In East Pakistan Sheikh Mujibur Rehman the Right-wing leader has shown signs of readiness to rally to a reform-minded regime On the left Mr Bhutto s socialism may well have a tinge of opportunism in it given a chance of power later he should co operate with an interim regime The veteran Maoist in the East Maulana Bhashani will present a more difficult problem But if reforms were seen to be imminent and backed with firmness the appeal of lawlessness may finish. A reformist regime rather than a revolutionary one is what Pakistan needs

One thing is clear Pakistan s military rulers could not tolerate the possibility of handing over the administration to the truly elected representatives of the people. They knew that in any form of democratic set up the Bengalis would rule over the country by dint of their majority in the overall population of Pakistan The Bengalis would enforce provincial regional autonomy which would reduce the Army s dominant position in the administration The ruling group therefore tried to create dissensions among the opposition to isolate the Bengali leadership by allowing the situation in East Pakistan to deteriorate and thus inject hatred against them in the minds of West Pakistani people Even at time when Ayub Khan posed as if he wanted peaceful settlement of the political crisis the Government controlled Press in Pakistan started anti India propaganda A typical case of this masterly diversion was a news published in the semi official paper *Pakistan Times* on March 11 The report spoke darkly of alleged Indian infilteration in East Pakistan Guns were also sold to the province the report said adding that the President had made this reference at the Round Table Conference

Awami League leader Mujibur Rehman promptly described this story as baseless and misleading Awami League

organ Daily Ittefaq denounced in these terms

We have witnessed this game during the last 21 years Whenever the people of East Pakistan started a movement to achieve their rights the vested interests and their media have always discovered the existence of Indian agents in it

They discovered Indian money assistance and support in the language movement in the demand for regional auto nomy and even in the historic 6-point movement

In the second week of March 1969 the *Pakistan Observer* of Dacca published the details of destructions of an agricul tural farm in East Pakistan It revealed that the Chairman of the local Basic Democracy unit instigated some elements who indulged in destruction The culprit was a staunch supporter of Ayub Khan [195]

It was the repetition of an old drama In 1954 the West Pakistani leaders organised anti Ahmadi riots in West Punjab and the Punjabi Governor General dismissed the Bengali Prime Minister Khwaja Nazimuddin in order to deprive the Bengalis from enjoying their democratic right to rule the country In 1956 another Bengali Prime Minis ter Suhrawardy was dismissed to prepare the ground for dealing a mortal blow to democracy In 1958 when the Bengalis expected to gain political rights through general elections Ayub Khan established his military rule over the country and now a new West Pakistani ruler appeared on the political scene to perpetuate colonialism

NOTES

1 *Pakistan Military Rule or Peoples Power* op cit pag 87
2 *Friends not Masters* op cit, page 59
3 *The New York Times* October 12 1958 *The Daily Telegraph* October 12 13 1958
4 Tariq Ali op cit page 87
5 D N Bannerjee *East Pakistan* op cit page 135 *The Political Development in Pakistan* page 262.
6 Some of the newspapers proceeded against were the *Ittefaq* the *Sangbad* and the *Dacca Times*

7 *The Morning News* Dacca March 1964
8 Karl Von Vorys *Political Development in Pakistan* op cit page 147
9 Edgar and Kathryn R Schuller *Public Opinion and Constitution Making in Pakistan* 1958—1962 (East Lansiq 1967) p 67
10 *The Morning News* July 3 1960
11 Karl Von Vorys *Political Development in Pakistan* op cit p 211
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14 *Ibid* p 231
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21 Karl Von Vorys *Political Development in Pakistan* op cit pp 194 195
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35 *The Pakistan Times* July 24 1962
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37 *The Pakistan Observer* October 28 1962
38 *Ibid*
39 *The Pakistan Times* September 29 1962
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42 *The Pakistan Times* Nov mber 1 1962.
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41 *Ibid The Pakistan Times*, January 8 1963
45 *The Times* London June 9 1963
46 *The Pakistan Times* May 23 1963
47 48 *The Daily Savera* June 19 1962
49 *The Pakistan Observer* June 4 1963
50 *Ibid* April 14 1963
51 *The Pakistan Observer* December 5 26 1963
52 On August 12, 1963 the Maulana denied any intention of meeting the President except on an all party basis Ten days later he was the guest of the Presid nt (*The P litical Developments in Pakistan* op cit p 268)
53 *The Times* Lond n July 8 1963
54 *The Outlook* December 28 1963 quot d by Tarı ı Ali in *Pakistan Military Dictatorship or Peoples Power* op cit pag 122
55 *Tarı ı Ali* ‹ p cit pag 140
56 *Political Conspiracies in Pakistan* op cit pag 275-77
57 *The P ikistan Times* July 10 1961
58 Khalid B Sayeed *The Political System of Pakistan* op cit pag 121
59 Civil and Military Ga ette *Lahore* Jun 29 196
60 *Ibid* July 23 1962
61 *Ibid* April 27 1963
62 *The C and M Ga ette* September 3 1963
63 *The Dawn* July 18 1962
64 Russel Brines, *The Indo Pakistani Conflict* (Pall Mall Press London 1968) pag 211
65 *Ibid* pag 213
66 Jamna Dass Akhtar, *Pak Espionage in India* (Oriental Publishers 1971) pag 49 The sacred relic was stolen by Rashid Tarali and Qad r But who made good their escape to Pakistan after having got themselves released on bail Th sacred relic was discovered from them on January 4 1964 It was stolen on December 27 1963)
67 *The Pakistan Times* D cember 30 1963
68 *The Dawn* January 1 1964
69 *Ibid*
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73 *The Pakistan Times January 5 1964*
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77 S H Khan Our Society and Communal Harmony *The Dacca Times* February 28 1964
78 *The Dawn* March 7 1964 D N Bannerjee *East Pakistan* op cit page 141
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81 NAP Debates Official Report June 11 1963 pp 170 171
82 Tariq Ali *Pakistan* op cit page 124
83 Karl Von Vorys *Political Developments in Pakistan*, op cit, page 277
84 *Ibid*
85 *The Pakistan Observer* September 24 2 26 1964
86 *Ibid* September 30 1964
87 *Ibid*
88 *Ibid*
90 *The Pakistan Times* July 22 1964
91 *The Dawn September 25 1964*
92 Khalid B Sayeed *Political System of Pakistan* op cit page 186
98 *Ibid*, page 228
99 *Ibid* page 241 (Italics mine)
100 *Ibid* page 139
101 Tariq Ali op cit pag 128 Khalid B Sayeed op cit Bhashani who had consid rable influence in the Rajshahi division did not campaign active y for Miss Jinnah probably because he did not want to upset Ayub s foreign policy which was veering steadily towards increasing friendship with China
102 *Political Conspiracies in Pakistan* op cit p 284
103 Awami Leaders suspected that Bhutto had manag d to poison him
104 Tariq Ali op cit page 129
105 *Ibid* pag 131 (Italics mine) *Th Dawn* February 24 1964
106 *The Peking Review* March 12 1965
107 Tariq Ali op cit page 231
108 *Ibid*
108a Rus el Brines *Th Indo Pakistani Conflict* op cit p 375
108b *Ibid* page 232
109 The Daily *Ittefaq* Dacca June 24 1965
110 Nurul Amin s speach in the East Pakistan Assembly quoted in *The Pak stan Observer* Dacca July 6 1965
111 *The New York Tim s* April 24 1965
112 Russel Brines op cit pag 233
113 *The Economist*, January 22, 1966.

157 Reuter s despatcl publ shed in *The Times of Ind a* January 22 1969
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168 *Ib l The Wash ng an Post* quoted by th UNI on February 27 1969
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170 *Th Pakistan T n es* F bruary 27 1969
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172 *Th I l a Expr ss* F bruary 23 1969 Adm ral Abson s a B ng l offic r who was lat r on nom na d as Governor of East Pak stan H wa forced to res gn because h advocat d m an ngful n got at ons w th Shc kh Muj bur R hman
173 INFA d spatch n the *Ind an Exp ess* January 21 1969
174a Quoted n the Fre Press J urnal February 27 1969
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175 *Na Rosh* Karach March 3 1969
176 D i l Koh s an Lahor Mar h 6 1969
177 *Th Da ly Mashr q* Lahor Mar h 10 1969
178 *Ib l* M r h 11 1969
179 *Naua Il aq* Lahor M 1 1 19
180 *Ib l*
181 Reut r s d pat h publ sh d *Th I lan Expr ss* Mar h 7 1969
182 *Ib d*
183 *Th Tr l n* Ambala Mar h 1 1969
184 *In l an Express* Mar h 10 1969
185 Th beg nn ng of th s on wa m k d by Sha p ex ha g s bet w en A gh ar Khan nd D n M n r V Adm ral Khan Th form r prot s d aga nst Khan to m re r f rr d a l r and thr a n d to stag a walk ou L rs o oth r pro t on part s upport d h m a d th D f r M t r expr s ed r gr t ov r a s r marks (*Mash q* Lah Mar 1 1969)
186 *Th Tr lune* Mar h 11 1969

187 *The Times of India* March 16 1969
188 *Ibid*
189 *Ibid* February 2 1969
190 *Ibid*
191 *The Statesman* March 3 1969
192 *The Tribune* March 3 1969
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194 *The Hindustan Times* April 2 1969
196 Extracts quoted in *Nawai Waqt* and reproduced by *Savera* on March 26 1969

Chapter IX

Old Wine in New Bottles

I cannot be a party to anything which makes the Centre weak. I am not prepared to preside over the liquidation of Pakistan. A strong Centre is essential to the very existence of Pakistan. I cannot accept the demand of some opposition parties that the Centre should be weak and the country should be divided into two parts. This is contrary to the very existence of Pakistan. The country is deteriorating day by day and the economy has [illegible] shattered. The Government is unable to control mob violence. I have therefore asked the military to take over the [illegible] of the nation and the existence of Pakistan. With these words Ayub Khan gave a parting kick to his opponents whom he used to call traitors and enemies of Pakistan. Who were these elements? He was certainly referring to the leaders of East Pakistan who demanded complete internal autonomy for their Province. Their followers had raised the banner of the revolt against colonial rule. On several occasions prior to his abdication he had threatened to use the language of weapons against them and to indulge in civil war in order to crush their movement.

A political observer said at that time: "Ayub Khan tried to remain in the saddle by creating differences among politi

cal parties which had threatened his regime He did succeed in this to some extent as the conservative Punjabi leaders had started praising him towards the end for his patriotism and statesmanship But by then it had become apparent that the people of Pakistan were determined to throw off the yoke of Punjabi domination and get full regional autonomy Sheikh Mujibur Rehman refused to water down his demands despite the tempting possibility of his becoming the first Prime Minister in the post-Ayub period The situation had worsened to such an extent that the right-wing parties of West Pakistan had even become doubtful of getting the required majority in the National Assembly for their proposed amendments to the Constitution It was perhaps at this stage that Ayub Khan decided to retrieve the situation by declaring martial law in the country This could be done only by handing over power to Gen Yahya Khan The two leaders kept their decision a well guarded secret the appointment of new Governors was also a ruse to keep the people in the dark The only indication of the coming event was the sending of two shiploads of army units to East Pakistan Martial law is therefore meant mainly for the people of the eastern wing who have never been entrusted by the military rulers with economic and political power*

The new Dictator paid rich tributes to Ayub Khan He endorsed his views when he said Field Marshal Mohammed Ayub Khan took all possible steps in the past few weeks to come to some arrangement whereby the peaceful and constitutional transfer of power could take place Unfortunately his efforts did not succeed He therefore called upon me to carry out my prime duty of protecting the country from utter destruction

He told his countrymen that he had no ambition other than the creation of conditions conducive to the establishment of a Constitutional Government He added It is my firm belief that a sound clean and honest admistration is the pre requisite for sane and constructive political life

and for the smooth transfer of power to the representatives of the people elected freely and impartially on the basis of adult franchise It will be the task of the elected representatives to give the country a workable constitution and find a solution of all other political economic and social problems that have been agitating the minds of the people I wish to make equally clear that we have every intention of completing the mission we have embarked upon to the nation s satisfaction. "

What was the mission that Yahya Khan had pledged to fulfil ? Ayub Khan had made it clear in his statement that he was opposed to the demand for provincial autonomy Yahya Khan s mission was to maintain a strong Centre He could achieve the object by adopting the following means

1 To strengthen his Government s image by taking strong measures against corrupt elements
2. To prove that he was a strongman and was in a position to achieve what his predecessors could not
3 To sow dissentions among politicians opposed to the conception of a strong Centre

Subsequent events proved that the Dictator adopted various tactics to achieve this object Draconian laws were imposed on a restive population These included whipping and death penalty for those who broke the laws Anyone criticising the imposition of martial law or its operation could be sent to jail for ten years The regulations said No one by word of mouth or in writing or by signals or otherwise will spread reports calculated to create alarm or despondence among the people Though the Dictator did not ban political parties he announced that no political activity would be tolerated under his regime Air Marshal Asghar Khan was no allowed to hold even an indoor meeting of *his party s Central Committee A large number of trade* union leaders were arrested for instigating the workers to go on strike Even the members of the Lahore Bar Association were not spared

a complaint filed by Shamim Akhtar wife of Raja Amjad Khan that Mr Akhtar got about 100 acres of her property transferred to his own name through deceit and fraud.[10]

In order to safeguard his position from army intrigues top army officials connected with Ayub's court were shunted out or transferred. High military officials serving in strategically important areas of West Pakistan were shunted off to the far eastern wing. Quite a few of the undesirable military leaders were shifted to civilian posts as heads of Public Sector Corporations.

There was still a danger to his own position. Air Marshal Nur Khan's growing popularity posed a challenge to the Dictator. Nur Khan, it may be recalled, was appointed Chief of the Air Force during the 1965 war. He had replaced Air Marshal Asghar Khan. It was claimed that it was under Nur Khan's leadership that the Pakistan Air Force had crippled its Indian counterpart. The claim itself was a blatant example of a big lie. Nevertheless he was senior to Yahya Khan and it was unthinkable for anybody to belittle his role in the 1965 war. After the declaration of Martial Law Nur Khan came constantly into the public gaze as enunciator of the policy on such important matters as Foreign Affairs, Education and Labour relations.[11] Being young and thus considered more dynamic, Nur Khan was being tipped as an acceptable candidate for the entire armed forces if and when election were held in Pakistan. A matter of more immediate import was the possibility of a *coup d'etat* on the lines which Ayub Khan had staged against his boss Iskander Mirza.[12] Not to be outwitted in the game of power, Navy Chief S M Ahson, a senior Bengali officer, had also started angling for a place in the scheme of things in future. His strategy, it is stated, was to become a balancing force in the power struggle between Yahya Khan and Nur Khan. Nur Khan was considered very close to the American Ambassador. But such contact was counter balanced by his very cordial relations with the Chinese Ambassador. Through his family connections he had a solid base not only among the Punjabis

but al o among the Urdu speaking refugees of U P He had over a dozen cousins who occupied key positions in the Civil Service the army and big business Yahya made to retire both Nur Khan and Navy Chief S M Ahson from their military careers O tensibly this was done to provide a civilian touch to the military regime He wanted to send Nur Khan to East Pakistan as Governor Nur Khan resented Ah on was ent there in his place and Nur Khan was appointed Governor of West Pakistan in place of General Attaur Rehman In February 1970 Nur Khan was forced to resign from this post He kept quiet for sometime but later on joined active politics

In August 1969 General Yahya Khan appointed his Council of Mini ters In this he followed the technique of his predecessor in every detail A few days before he had hinted at the possibility of his taking assistance from able civilians in the country When he first indicated his desire to associate civilians with his regime it had evoked widespread if muffled criticism *Nawai Waqt* went to the extent of aying that this could create dis essions in the country The bold Rawalpindi weekly *Inter-Wing* now banned aid the step would be a retrograde one It would give the impression that the regime wanted to keep itself in power for a long time But so strong was the terror of Martial Law that when the announcement was actually made no voices of dissent raised in public It was composed of those who had either were retired from politics or were never in it A glaring a pect is that even in their own fields they had never been known for any brilliance Talking of the eight member Cabinet the most intriguing name was to be that of Mr A M Malik He was a Bengali He was Pakistan s Ambassador to China till 1962 He was withdrawn from his post due to his belief that China posed as much a danger to Pakistan as it did to India Another nominee from East Pakistan was M K Hafizuddin who e only distinction was that as Inspector General of Police of the Province he was considered a terror by radical

elements By admitting him to his court Yahya Khan perhaps wanted to show that he was determined to crush the supporters of the autonomy movement The mailed fist attitude towards the people was also apparent from the inclusion of another former Inspector General of Police Sardar Abdur Rashid He was given the important portfolio of Home and Kashmir Affairs Rashid s reputation of being the most ruthless I G of the N W F P was no doubt the decisive factor in his favour in view of the possibility that the democratic movement may revive at any time Another member of the Cabinet Nawab Muzaffar Hussain Quizalbush had no links with public life He had some position among the aristocratic Shia minority in the Punjab

Major General Sher Ali Khan a paternal uncle of the Nawab of Pataudi was appointed Minister of Information He was a person remote from public life

Mahmud Haroon a big businessman from Sind was also included in the Cabinet His biggest qualification was that he belonged to the top quarter of the 20 families which controlled 80 per cent of Pakistan s industrial wealth and his family had considerable interest in banking insurance and textiles and controlled almost 60 per cent of the country s foreign trade It is significant to note that in spite of the installation of the so called civilian Council of Ministers the real power remained in the hands of General Yahya Khan assisted by his Deputy Chiefs Yahya Khan kept departments like External Affairs Defence Finance and General Establishment in his own hands Of the rest of the portfolios important ones like Home and Kashmir Affairs Information and Broadcasting Agriculture and Power Development were given to the more trusted puppets from West Pakistan Thus East Pakistan continued to be a colony under the control of the West Pakistan rulers

Yahya Khan was now determined to divert the people s attention from their real problems On the one hand he assured China that Pakistan was her best friend and on the

other his emissaries started wooing the U S A and the Soviet Union To them he said that the extremist elements in the country were forcing him to lean towards China for strengthening the defence of the country He was able to get military help from the Soviet Union because the latter wanted to wean away Pakistan from China Thus Yahya Khan was able to get about 150 T-54 and T 55 tanks from the Soviet Union besides obtaining assurances of economic aid[14] The controlled Press in West Pakistan acclaimed it as a victory of the new regime which it was alleged had weaned away the Soviet Union from India Similarly the American Government was persuaded to resume supply of American armaments to Pakistan[15] In August 1970 Yahya Khan met President Nixon America s Secretary of State William Rogers met President Yahya Khan Significantly all the papers directly controlled by the Government had been floating rumours till September 1970 that the American decision to supply arms had been deferred indefinitely due to Indian pressure *The Pakistan Times* Washington Correspondent went so far as to say that due to intense to lobbying by India the U S had decided to write off Pakistan as an ally or friend Such despatches created a furore all over Pakistan It was then stated by a Foreign Office spokesman that the Government was in constant touch with America over the question and it is hoped that satisfactory results will follow Through these reports the impression was sought to be created that the situation for Pakistan vis a vis America had become almost hopeless In such a situation it was only adroit handling by the President which got what it wanted Yahya Khan was thus being built up as a man who could get things done[16] When the leftist parties criticised Pakistan s acceptance of American military help the President said he was determined to secure arms from all sources for the defence of the country[17] The Press in West Pakistan tried to justify this bargain by telling people that India was making preparations to attack Pakistan It was

freedom of this State required much more sacrifices in comparison to its population and area The struggle to liberate the State might require more sacrifices than those given by the people of Algeria or Vietnam The Daily *Jung* of Rawalpindi stated that the people of Kashmir want to join Pakistan and it is for this purpose that they are fighting against a mighty power like India [31] While the *Pakistan Times* claimed that China supported the Kashmirs just struggle for the right of self determination Sardar Abdul Qayyum Khan said that war with India was inevitable on the Kashmir issue He said that the war may take place in 1971 [3]

Pakistan joined hands with China in her sinister plans to foment trouble in Nagaland and the Mizo District The so called rebels from these areas were provided with training in guerilla warfare In addition to this the Pakistan Government opened an air wing for these traitors According to reports reaching New Delhi a small landing strip was constructed 15 kilometers south east of Rangamati where two fighter planes were based The camp to train these men in flying fighter and bomber planes was established under the charge of Mr Sarfraz Khan a ground engineer of the Pakistan Air Force and a Chinese expert Mr Fong lu [33] The arrest of a number of Pakistani spies in Chandigarh and Kashmir in 1969 and 1970 proved that Pakistan was preparing to create trouble in the Punjab and Kashmir

Simultaneously the Pakistani rulers started wooing the Arab countries Pakistan was already supplying arms to the so called Royal Yemani forces in their fight against the Revolutionary Government of Yemen. This was being done through the Government of Saudi Arabia At the same time the Pakistan Government sent a sizable force to Jordon to help the King of that country against the Arab guerillas Reports reaching Washington said that Pakistan was sending military observers to Libya [34]

The outbreak of communal riots in Ahmadabad in September 1969 provided Yahya Khan with an opportunity to pose

as a defender of Indian Muslims When he succeeded in ousting of the Indian Delegation from the World Muslim Conference held at Rabat in Morocco the Pakistan Press paid rich tributes to him In an obvious attempt to discredit India in the eyes of the Arab world Pakistani embassies in these countries had started a malicious anti Indian propaganda campaign since May 1970 These embassies in their news bulletins circulated among foreign missions had been putting out mostly material that sought to portray India as a country out to annihilate the Muslim minority population Although the fire incident in Kashmir were the work of Pakistani agents[35] these bulletins charged India with conspiring against the lives of the Kashmiri Muslims[36] *The Pakistan Times* reported the decision of the Pakistan Government to send non official delegations abroad to publicise the alleged persecution of Muslims in India[36]

The Minister of Home and Kashmir Affairs Sardar Abdur Rashid told a group of Kashmir leaders in Rawalpindi that the path of active struggling for the liberation of Kashmir is not ruled out An Indian newspaper said editorially that it is possible that the ruling clique is thinking of forcing another show down with India with assistance from the United State and China Lying campaigns like the present one have invariably preceded attempts on them to provoke incidents along the frontier[33]

While Sheikh Abdulla s frequent meetings with the Pakistan High Commissioner were given wide publicity the Press in Pakistan published the statement of Abdulla Afzal Beg and Maulvi Farooq to show that the Kashmeris were looking forward to Pakistan and China in their fight for liberation On November 18 1970 the *Pakistan Times* reported that Sheikh Abdulla declared in Srinagar that great China s unstinted support for the Kashmiris as communicated to President Yahya Khan on his recent visit to that country would serve as a catalytic agent in consuming away the chains of Indian slavery He said that Premier

Chou En Lai's assurances regarding the Kashmiris liberation struggle had been warmly welcomed throughout the valley It had enhanced Pakistan's prestige and it had succoured our will to be free at all cost

While Yahya Khan was busy in building up his image as a would be liberator of Kashmir his utterances showed that Pakistan was not going to have friendly relations with India His anti India speeches and preparations for war against India were in fact meant to warn the people that the ruling military clique would not allow elements aspiring for good neighbourly relations with India to become rulers of Pakistan This warning was meant to terrorise the followers of *Sheikh Mujibur Rehman* and *Wali Khan* who wanted to effect fundamental changes in the foreign policies of Pakistan

The President made his position clear when in reply to questions from press correspondents about the role of foreign money in Pakistan's forthcoming election He said that he had equal doubts because some countries inimical to Pakistan and he specifically mentioned India in this connection - are bound to help certain forces to harm Pakistan [34] Under the caption Demogogic Thinking *The Indian Express* wrote editorially

It is surprising that a Head of State should descend to the level of a demagogue but President Yahya Khan absurd allegation against India has sinister implications for some political parties in Pakistan itself The Pakistani President did not name the forces which he thinks countries inimical to Pakistan are bound to help but from what some Pakistani politicians have been saying *it seems clear that the reference is to the Awami League of Mr Mujibur Rehman and the National Awami Party of Mr Wali Khan* (*Since a friend cannot be an enemy the help that China might be* giving to Maulana Bhashani's National Awami Party is evidently not regarded as interference in Pakistan's affairs) By thus making known his hostility towards some important political parties President Yahya Khan has laid himself open

fering in the election in defiance of his own assurance that the elections would be free and fair The Awami League should now know that any constitution which contains the substance of its six points will not be authenticated by the President [35]

These outburts from the mouth of the Head of State encouraged his own henchmen like Abdul Qayyum to charge the followers and supporters of Mujibur Rehman Wali Khan and Abdus Samad Khan with conspiring against the integrity of Paki tan As we shall see later on in this chapter West Pakistani leaders started competing with *one another in* indulging in such kind of baseless charges against their opponents

Khan Abdul Qayyum went a step further when he advo cated the formation of a confederation of non-Arab Muslim countries of Iran Pakistan and Afghanistan He said that this was the only way to fight the Hindu menance and curb regional dangers emanating from the demand for indepen-dence by various provinces of Pakistan [36]

While the threat of war between Pakistan and India loomed large on the horizon the provocatory speeches against the minority community resulted in large scale exodus of the Hindus from East Pakistan According to official information available in New Delhi refugees were pouring into West Bengal at the rate of between 1000 and 1500 a day in the month of May 1970 On some days the figure touched 2000 Although nearly 50 000 refugees were sent out from Bengal to camps in different States run by the Central Government some 30 000 displaced people were still at Bushirbad and refugees were coming from Khulna and Jessore There was also a trickle from Faridpur and Barisal districts Sheikh Mujibur Rahman blamed the exodus of non Muslims from East Pakistan on religious fanatics and reactionaries who he said were whipping up communal frenzy in the name of electioneeing According to the Dacca weekly Janat the Shaikh told a public meeting at Roujan near Chittagong that Muslims in East Pakistan had

an obligation to protect the rights of the minorities. "The minorities," he added, "are the citizens of this country. They are not foreigners who have just floated in."[31]

In the meantime the Dictator was trying to show that what Jinnah, Liaquat Ali and others had failed to achieve he would be able to achieve for the Muslims. The Government-controlled Press in West Pakistan claimed that Yahya Khan would achieve glory for Islam by organising the Muslim powers into an international group. The Pakistan Ambassador to the United Nations Agha Shahi told newsmen at the UN Headquarters that Pakistan wanted the Islamic group of countries that recently met in Rabat over the Al Aqsa mosque arson incident to become a permanent grouping involved in political cooperation beyond West Asia.[32] In fact it was an attempt to put new life into the CENTO and the RCD. One aim could also be to establish a group which would be in sympathy with the US and Western strategy on the lines of groups like the ASPAC and the South East Asian Ministerial Conference. Pakistan, according to political observers, was playing an active role in these efforts and was reported to be trying to influence Afganistan by making vague suggestions about a negotiated settlement with it.[33] Although it was a pro-West move the Pakistani Press hailed it as the harbinger of Islamic unity.

In the September 6, 1970 issue of the *Pakistan Observer Supplement* a prominent and anonymously written article (almost certainly Army inspired) entitled "An Approach to Warfare in Pakistan" expounded the necessity for a new philosophy for the direction of war. Taking a leaf from *The Thoughts of Chairman Mao* the writer asserted that *the emergence* of such a philosophy must be related not only to the general laws of war but also to specific laws as applicable to Pakistan. Only then could the Pakistan Army adopt those *doctrines* best suited to the genius of the country.

It will therefore be seen that apart from the political aims the emergence of a philosophy is related intrinsically to

certain characteristics or features of a country which can never be overlooked Let us look at the characteristics of our own country to understand the problem in its correct perspective To my mind the e are

(a) The country is divided into two parts separated by a thousand miles of territory belonging to a country which is hostile to Pakistan
(b) It is not yet fully developed industrially and economically and therefore can neither afford a large standing army nor a protracted war
(c) The country has no depth in the military sense and has large continuous land borders to defend
(d) It must be capable of effectively protecting its territorial integrity and crippling an aggressor
(e) In the event of war prospects of outside assistance are remote

The above characteristics are so diverse in nature that a new philosophy of directing the war in Pakistan has to be evolved

The conclusions which the writer drew from the above characteristics were firstly that the war Pakistan would fight would be of a limited nature and of short duration—and would therefore have to be intense to be decisive secondly that the two wings of the country would have to sustain themselves —and fight complementary battles thirdly that the enemy must be dealt with in his own territory and fourthly that the armed forces must possess the potential to administer a decisive blow Developing doctrines tactics and techniques from these conclusions the author stressed that after two world wars and a host of local wars we now know for sure that the tank is an offensive weapon it must be used in mass to achieve decisive results It must spearhead an advance it must be used boldly But the pertinent point to see is whether these innumerable lessons do really enlighten us on the use of our own personnel under the topographical conditions obtaining in our own country against an enemy whose resources capabilities and poten-

tralities we know If the answer is in the negetive because of generalities loose application of broad principles and vagueness of tactics the problem is very much unsolved

Major General D K Dikshit (Retd) in an article under the caption Pakistan s Military Rule took serious notice of this article and pointed out that although there was nothing very profound in these observations what was important was that this was what the hawks in the Rawal pindi Headquarters were thinking and this was what the hawks were trying to persuade the country to accept that the experience of the 1965 war proved that though Pakistan is a peace loving country it was imperative that they now consider the implications of a defensive strategy vis a vis lack of depth the strategy of conservation or attrition or even mere acquisition of territory which presumably were Ayub Khan s aims in 1965 The author does not spell it out but it is obvious that the hawks recommended a new technique correlated to the psychological need of the commanders and soldiers based on the decisive use of armoured movement outside the gate

Maj General D K Dikshit adds If the hawks have their way end there is no reason to believe that even after the coming elections there is going to be any emphasis on the army s prestige and influence— hen Pakistan s future military strategy is going to be based on the Israeli concept of a pre emptive armoured strike from West Punjab into our Punjab plains East Pakistan will have to look after itself—if necessary with the help of a Chinese ultimatum pointedly warning India as it did in 1965 to lay off the Eastern Wing Either that or the Bengalis will have to sustain themselves while the hawks of Punjab mass their armoured forces for a deep decisive offensive in the West And this is what they are going to prepare the country to face The creation of an aggressive atmosphere in defence (sic) is physical as well as mental

Pakistanis war preparations may be viewed in the con text of Bhutto s writings In his book *The Myth of Indepen-*

dence he points out that Pakistan should wrest Assam and some districts of India adjacent to East Pakistan He says To these East Pakistan has very good claims [41] He is also anxious to annex Gurdaspur Ferozepur and certain other parts of the Punjab including the district of Amrit ar because as he puts it all these extensive and valuable territories were arbitarily and unjustly given to india to further trengthen that country at the cost of Pakistan [4]

It is generally known that Bhutto has close contacts with the hawks in Paki tan Army Some observers believe that Bhutto is in league with Yahya Khan Probably they want to achieve these aims with Chinese help Pakistan s help to the so-called rebel Nagas and Mizos may be explained in this context

All these moves clearly demonstrated that the Dictator was building up his own image by making war preparations against India and projecting him elf as the ole person who could lead the country to Islamic glory This was a clear hint that he would not allow his opponents to bring about any fundamental change in the political struc ure of the country However the people s urge for the establishment of the parliamentary system of democracy did not seem to be weakened as a result of these tactics Similarly the people of East Pakistan seemed to be determined to carry on their struggle for complete autonomy The military junta was facing troubles all over the country

In the last week of May 1969 the eighty year old leader of the National Awami Party Maulana Bhashani demanded that if President Yahya Khan did not meet the needs of the people of Pakistan he would be overthrown The warning was recorded in a review of Pakistan scene by the diplomatic correspondent of *The Far Eastern Economic Review* Harold Munthe Kass wri ing from Rawalpindi The Maulana said that in the modern world no Government can run the administration with bullets and bayonets and without popular support The Maulana was stated to have declared that in the struggle between the oppressor

and the oppressed it is always the oppressed who ultimately wins and that it will take 'less time here than in Vietnam [13]

In the third week of July 1969 the President met a number of political leaders including Bhutto Wali Khan Mujibur Rahman, Bhashani and Abdul Qayyum On July 23 he said in Lahore that there was no consensus among the political leaders on the subject of a new constitution for Pakistan He told journalists that it was up to the political parties to spell out their views on the subject Asked when General Elections were likely to be held the President said Leave it to me I will take my own time [14]

At once Bhutto spelled out his views He urged the holding of an all-party convention to overcome what he called hurdles in the way of early elections He suggested that the 1956 Constitution of Pakistan which brought about unity—East and West—should be amended to create a single unit Abdul Qayyum Khan kept quiet but the leader of the Jamaat Islami Maulana Tufail Mohammad urged the re urrection of the 1956 Constitution Almost all the other parties opposed this demand The leader of the National Awami Party (pro Moscow group) Khan Wali Khan demanded the break up of the One unit of West Pakistan and amalgamation of all Pushtu speaking areas to form Pakhtunistan with complete internal autonomy Sheikh Mujibur Rehman supported this demand Powerful Punjabi politicians like Daultana Asghar Khan and Chaudhuri Mohammad Ali agreed that the identity of the old provinces should be restored forthwith

The influential *Nawai Waqt* pointed out There is actually not much difference among political leaders on the e questions About One Unit almost every politician with the name has aid tha this should be dismembered On the question of representation in the two wings West Pakistani politicians are feeling more or le s reconciled to accepting the Eastern wing s demand for being represented on the basis of population and the only controversial issue is that of the extent of internal autonomy to be enjoyed by the constituent

units of the country This the paper felt could be decided at a later date after elections were held on the basi of universal adult franchise [46]

This gave a shock to the Dictator because the break up of the one unit of West Pakistan would mean a considerable dent in the power structure of the military regime Yahya Khan had thought that he would be able to play one politician against another on questions like the ratio of repre entation for the two wings of Pakistan the extent of internal autonomy and the future of one unit When Bhutto too changed his mind and spoke in support of this demand it became apparent to him that his game would not succeed

The Awami League Chief Sheikh Mujibur Rehman demanded a national referendum on the points described by the President as tumbling blocks in framing a Constitution [47] The Sheikh was not satisfied by the appointment of the Election Commi ion He said that without fixing a date for elections a feeling would grow that the regime was not erious about the fulfilment of its promises He said that 70 per cent of the people of Pakistan were in favour of the di memberment of one unit in West Pakistan representation on the basis of population of East and West Pakistan and full internal autonomy for the federating units He even threw a challenge that he and his colleagues would withdraw from politics if at least two thirds of Pakistani people did not vote for these demands in a national referendum [48]

It may be recalled that the President in his broadcast to the nation on July 28 had stated that he was thinking in terms of his own Constitution [49] The air was thick with rumours that his Constitution might be a modification of Ayub Khan s Basic Democracy with certain parliamentary trappings It was generally said that there was no possibility of the military rulers holding elections before 1971 In the meantime official spoke men were busy in creating confusion The Minister for Information and National Affairs Nawabzada Sher Ali Khan said that Pakistan was established on the basis of Islamic ideology and it was by continuing to

adher to this theocratic concept that Pakistan could prosper He 'regretted that even after 20 years of Pakistan's existence there was no national consensus on the fundamentals of the country's policy and it was the disunity and provincialism which led to the promulgation of martial law in the country

These statements encouraged the reactionary elements to demand the establishment of an Islamic State and oppose socialism These elements criticised the demand for provincial autonomy According to them provincial autonomy was dangerous to the conception of Islamic unity and socialism was the negation of Islamic philosophy

Maulana Maudoodi Chaudhuri Mohammad Ali Air Marshal Asghar Khan Maulana Ghulam Ghaus Hazarvi and many others stood for incorporating the fundamental principles of Islam in any future Constitution However they suspected the intentions of the rulers and demanded in clear words the establishment of the parliamentary system based on adult franchise The ruling Junta was tyring to organise its own groups It was said that Yahya Khan had already won over Abdul Qayyum and his followers He was also trying to win Ayub Khan's support Ayub Khan was still the President of the Convention Muslim League According to a report published in the daily *Jung* of Karachi Ayub Khan was likely to return to active politics[50] His Muslim League was the only party with funds—unofficially estimated at between 6 million pounds to 8 million pounds to contest the elections He decided to strike back at his opponents who alleged tyranny and corruption in his 10 years of rule He told the Urdu language newspaper *Mashriq* I served the country to the best of my ability I have done nothing of which I should feel ashamed or guilty While I do not propose contesting future presidential elections I shall retain my interest in Pakistani politics[51] However within his own party he had to face serious trouble He decided to reshuffle his party executive to appoint those who could draw votes from East Pakistan He dismissed Khan

Abdus Sabur from the Vice Presidentship of the Party and appointed another Bengali Mr Fazlul Qadir Chaudhury in his place He also directed Mr Chaudhuri to perform party functions on his behalf until a new President was elected In order to strengthen his group s position in the Punjab he expelled the ex Minister of Information Saeed Ahmad Kamani from the Presidentship of the Punjab Muslim League and appointed Mr Mohammad Yasin Khan Bhutto in his place Both Mr Sabur and Kirmani refused to oblige him The former called a meeting of his Working Committee and expelled Ayub Khan from the Muslim League Thus Ayub Khan s party was divided into two factions each claiming to be the real convention Muslim League In the Punjab Mian Mumtaz Daultana got himself elected as the President of the Council Muslim League while Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan claimed that he was the real President of the Council Muslim League Air Marshal Asghar Khan charged Ayub Khan with conspiring to defeat the restoration of parliamentary democracy in Pakistan He said that the former President was working feverishly behind the scenes to get his sycophants elected to the National and Provincial Assemblies for the purpose The former Governor of West Pakistan Nawab Mushtaq Ahmad Gurmani demanded prosecution of Ayub Khan on serious charges of corruption and misusing public funds for remaining in power The Ayub regime in 10 years he said had turned every Pakistani into a debtor of 20 18 000 Whereas at the time of imposition of dictatorship in 1958 Pakistan had to pay a loan of Rs 40 crores but had in treasury of gold and foreign exchange worth Rs 132 crore [6]

It is interesting to note that Bhutto had also started wooing Ayub Khan On December 4 he met the former President However when a former Director of Information Noor Ahmad revealed that Ayub Khan who had launched a campaign against smuggling was himself engaged in smuggling at the time of his overthrow and a leader of the Democratic Party demanded of Ayub Khan that he clear

his position about his association with the scandal of Christian Keeler of the Profumo affair fame the former President announced his retirement from public life[63]

The Bengali leaders continued demanding restoration of parliamentary democracy In the middle of August 1969 Attaur Rahman a former Chief Minister of East Bengal called for a truly federal Constitution for Pakistan framed by a Constituent Assembly elected on the basis of adult franchise and providing for equal number of members to East and West Pakistan In an interview with the influential Daily *The Pakistan Observer* he outlined the policy of his newly formed National Progressive League and said it stood for autonomy not only for East Bengal but also for the various units of the western wing such as Sind the North West Frontier Province Baluchistan and the Punjab[64]

A fresh political storm gathered over the President s indication that the military regime would remain in power at least till the middle of 1971 That was clearly announced by Mr Abdul Sattar the newly appointed Election Commissioner He said that elections on the basis of adult franchise could not be expected before the spring of 1971 Gen Yahya Khan had already said it would be only after instal tion of a democratically elected Government and promulga tion of a proper constitution that he would order the troops to go back to the barracks

Indirectly commenting upon the official pronouncements Air Marshal Asghar Khan said that no one should remain under any illusion about the determination of the people to come again in the streets if a popular government was not installed within a year or so In an interview to an influential Urdu weekly *Akhbar e Jahan* the Air Marshal also complained that the schedule outlined by the Election Commissioner would delay the elections unnecessarily He also brushed aside the argument of Gen Yahya Khan that no real progress could be made towards a democratic order

unless politicians came to a unanimous decision about th type of constitution they wanted

The Air Marshal said this seemed to him an untenabl argument Instead of complaining about the differences o opinion among politicians Gen Yahya Khan should himsel come forward with a democratic solution He warned tha if an impression was created that the martial law regim wanted to delay the process of democratisation unnecessarily the people would react as sharply against it as they ha done against the previous regime

Mr Z A Bhutto also warned the Government that un less immediate and tangible steps were taken for promul gation of a democratic constitution the people were likely t lose faith in the promises of the new regime

Addressing students in Hyderabad (Sind) Mr Bhutt said that if circumstances compelled them we could agai take to the methods of agitation and revolution which ha toppled a powerful dictator like Field Marshal Ayub Khan

Mian Mumtaz Daultana leader of the Council Muslir League directly criticised the Government s decisio to delay the elections In an interview to *Nawa-e-Waq* an Urdu daily of Lahore Mr Daultana said he was sure tha elections could be held within six to seven months A dela of nearly two years was not only unnecessary but it coul create a feeling of frustration among the people

In October 1969 serious clashes between the Bengali and the Urdu speaking Bihari residents in East Bengal too place The outstanding characteristic of this trouble was tha it was not confined to a few pockets The whole of Dacca Narayanganj and suburbs like Syedpur and Parbatipur wer affected Ostensibly the trouble started over complaints o *discriminatory* treatment to the *Urdu* language in *Eas* Bengal There had been a demand for some time that th electoral rolls that were being prepared for the election should also be published in Urdu The trouble began whe an association called The Anjuman Tahafuz e Urdu decided to observe an Urdu Day on October 1 It is allege

that some of the refugee hotheads many of whom included Jamaat Islami activists had gone round telling the people to put in Urdu signboards instead of Bengali They coerced some Bengali speaking shopkeepers who incidentally were in a minority to sign a memorandum demanding an equal status for Urdu in East Bengal This led to a clash which resulted in major rioting in Dacca and elsewhere The Press in West Pakistan published sensational stories about these riots claiming the toll of life as high as over a hundred A report of the Dacca hospital however revealed that out of 300 wounded persons three had died A number of Pakistani news papers reported that another cause of these riots was the discovery of gangs of Urdu speaking refugees trading in white slave traffic These persons had abducted a large number of Bengali women and sold them in the western wing Quite a few of these women were smuggled abroad especially to the Gulf areas It was alleged that these gangs used to operate with the connivance of not only the Punjabi police but also the officials of the Pakistan International Airway and the Pakistan shipping Corporation[4a]

Special targets of mob fury were petty officials including members of the police belonging to the Urdu speaking minority A couple of police stations were also attacked In the words of an observer the malice was much deeper than the electoral rolls in Urdu To the Bengalis whose sympathy was wholly with the movement for autonomy the Urdu speaking people from Bihar were the stooges of Punjabis who had become the symbol of West Pakistani domination The term Punjabi incidentally included every West Pakistani A number of refugee leaders especially those under the influence of Jamaat Islami had begun a political offensive which now boomranged on the whole community From early August this year they become militant defenders of Islamic values against what they called the onslaughts of alien ideologies like socialism and secularism They went to the extent of touring West Pakistan gathering support for

measures to curb what they called anti Pakistan trends in the Eastern province They claimed that Urdu was the Islamic language which must replace the Bengali language They condemned the demand for provincial autonomy and openly said it was a Hindu conspiracy to convert East Bengal into an Indian colony They even demanded division of East Bengal into two provinces They supported the military rulers against the supporters of democracy So serious was their challenge to peace and solidarity of East Bengal that Mujibur Rehman was compelled to come out openly against their campaign He told a gathering of his party workers that the foremost task before them was to expose those who wanted to disrupt communal harmony and sabotage the people s movement for autonomy [5]

It is said that the linguistic riots in East Bengal were the main reason for Yahya Khan s rushing back home cutting short his tour by five days However the conditions near civil war in East Bengal were not the only reason for his nervousness In some curious ways such clashes do help the regime to keep itself in power Any outburst of Bengali nationalism can always be presented as a threat to the supremacy of Islam which actually means domination of western wing It was therefore easy to understand why the so called atrociaties on Urdu speaking refugees in East Bengal were played up out of all proportion in West Pakistani propaganda The Government controlled Press went the farthest in fabricating horror reports about what happened in Dacca and elsewhere All this went to provide ammunition for reactionary propaganda Maximum encouragement was given to organisations like Jamaat Islami for propagating the thesis that Pakistan had entered into a crucial phase of confrontation between the forces of socialism and of Islam The offices of the Awami League and the National Awami Party in Lahore and elsewhere were attacked Even an attempt to assasinate Mr Bhutto was made because he was attacking the Jammat in his speeches It was reported that he was attacked by 40 men in a truck as he was driving

his associates from Sujabad to Multan 120 miles south-east of Lahore Four of his associates were wounded [5]

The calculation of the regime that the trouble in East Bengal could be turned to advantage however proved incorrect This line did not cut much ice mainly because the working class in West Pakistan refused to be misled The West Pakistan working class and the intelligentsia had played a major role in the overthrow of the Ayub regime Indications were that the pattern would be repeated in the month to come The first shot was fired by the Karachi port workers who went on strike in defiance of Martial Law regulations This was followed by strikes in 15 textile mills in the same city More significantly the strikers took out huge processions though anybody connected with an unauthorised procession could be sentenced to seven years imprisonment The fact that thousands of persons joined the procession showed their scant regard for the rulers terror tactics The police did try the usual show of force Wanton use was made of tear gas shells About a hundred persons were arrested Yet judging by martial law standard the regime s reaction was mild It was pointed out by a foreign correspondent that there were serious differences in the military junta over the policy towards such processions Hawks like West Pakistan s Martial Law Administrator General Tikka Khan wanted that such rebellion should be crushed with an iron hand He had taken care to post troops from West Punjab at strategic points in Karachi He and his associates were of the view that allowing such rebellious tendency would only help the mutiny to succeed [6] But Air Marshall Nur Khan the newly appointed Governor of West Pakistan seemed to think otherwise He felt that confrontation would bring disaster for the regime It might infuriate the people further and make them uncontrollable The loyalty of some senior military officers was in doubt In this connection it is significant to note that Noor Khan had to resign from his post after a couple of months

The popular discontent all over the country was spreading Strikes took place in Lahore Lyallpur and Okara The Railwaymen s Federation gave an ultimatum that trains would be brought to a stand still if their demand for better conditions of service were not met by December 15 Simultaneously *students* become *restive* again. Processions were taken out demanding the release of arrested leaders and restoration of democratic rights Students in East Bengal did not lag behind In fact they had started defiance of Martial Law regulations much earlier Three students organisations observed an Education Day on September 17 defying these regulations[68] The three organisations were the East Pakistan Students Union the East Pakistan *Students League and the East Pakistan Students Organisation* Sheikh Mujibur Rehman supported the students With the students unity achieved the Communist gave a call to the people in general to support the student s cause But they made it clear that all activity should be peaceful so that the authorities should not find a pretext to resort to repression The students announced that they would hold meetings within the University compound and take out a procession The Government after discussions with the students yielded However soon after the authorities tarted their mischief Six students were notified as having made prejudicial speeches on Education Day They were asked to face a trial but no student appeared before the military tribunal On the contrary demanding withdrawal of the cases against these students these organisations organi ed strikes in Dacca on two days and on one day in early October throughout the province When Yahya Khan came to Dacca the entire university building was occupied by the East Pakistan Rifles The armed police raided hostels to arrest the students leaders Rifles sten guns bren guns etc were brandished The order shoot to kill was repeatedly announced But nothing could cow down the students Ultimately the President had to give in During his stay in Dacca he pardoned the six

students had won and the cases against them were withdrawn. The victory thus achieved boosted the morale of the students. It is said that the Governor of East Bengal Admiral S M Ahsan advised the President not to precipitate any trouble.

The unrest was also spreading among the working class rapidly. In October 1969 there were strikes whose number was greater than in any previous year. The police resorted to firing on striking workers. This created resentment among other sections of the people. In the second week of November two persons were sentenced by a special military court in East Bengal on a charge of gherao. Reporting this Pakistan Radio said one was sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment and 10 lashes and the other one year's rigorous imprisonment." According to a report published in the Dawn Air Marshal Asghar Khan warned the military rulers that failure to restore democracy would lead to chaos. He told a public meeting in Noakhali that there was no alternative to democracy. He also pointed out that the problems of East Pakistan could be resolved only by giving the province its due share of power at the centre.

In the meantime the National Awami Party of Maulana Bhashani had divided in two factions. The dissident faction was mainly led by the right communists and other likeminded elements. Maulana Bhashani's own faction seemed to have remained intact but in fact it was also divided into two groups. Extremists like the Naxalites were headed by Mr Toha General Secretary of the Party and Mr Phannu Dutt a well known extremist leader who headed the District Committee of the National Awami Party of Chittagong district. Although Maulana Bhashani was the president of the Party, the extremist elements accused him and his close colleagues as potential reactionaries following the path of bourgeois reformation. The Toha group had been stressing the need for denouncing all methods of parliamentary activity and taking up the active leadership of the people's revolution in Pakistan. The significance of this development

lay in the fact that the pro Chinese communists were using the National Awami Party s pro Peking group as their main organisation for political work This had been done due to a continuous ban on the Communist Party since 1952 It was a significant fact that inspite of Pakistan s growing proximity to Moscow and Peking Yahya Khan s Government did not think it fit to withdraw the ban which was imposed immediately after the framing up of the notorious Rawalpindi Conspiracy Case The communists were thus forced to work through other political parties For various reasons they chose the National Awami Party which included at that time besides Maulana Bhashani leaders like late Mian Iftakharuddin Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan Khan Wali Khan Mr G M Syed and Khan Abdus Samad During the course of time the party got split into what are called the pro Moscow groups and the pro Peking groups headed respectively by Khan Wali Khan and Maulana Bhashani[62]

The National Awami Party (Wali Khan group) started a campaign for building up a National United Front in East Bengal Its major demands included lifting of martial law immediate election on the basis of adult franchise and sale of foodgrains and other commodities at controlled prices The Party supported the demand for provincial autonomy The proposed Front stood for alliance in action with the Awami League, led by Sheikh Mujibur Rehman and the National Awami Party of Maulana Bhashani The Maulana rejected this proposal while Mujibur Rehman kept quiet The Right Communists used to say that he nurses an ambition to become Prime Minister after the election He, is, therefore against any popular movement at present [63]

In October 1969 Maulana Bhashani called a peasants' conference at Shahpur village in Pabna district It was attended by about 10 000 peasants But the two-day Conference practically ended in one day The second day was marked by confusion Bhashani s supporters clashed with the Nuxalites The other National Awami Party organised a Council meeting at Dacca in early October The meeting was atten

ded by more than 1 000 delegates It issued a call to all democratic forces to unite over the demand for speedy election of a Constituent Assembly lifting of martial law and supply of food and other commodities at cheap and controlled prices

Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan s visit to India during October 1969 provided the Government controlled Press in West Pakistan with an opportunity to denounce the leaders of the National Awami Party Khan Wali Khan and Khan Abdus Samad as agents of India and enemies of Pakistan Badshah Khan s three days fast against communal riots in India made his Pakistani opponents perturbed His clarification of his stand regarding Pakhtunistan was systematically suppressed by the Press in West Pakistan *Much was made out of the consequences* of the monetary offering which was to be made to Badshah Khan Sensationalism was sought to be created over Badshah Khan s meetings in Kabul with his son Wali *Khan and Khan Abdus Samad the well known Baluch leader* The *Jung* of Karachi came out with a story that these leaders had gone to Kabul to beg Bad hah Khan for taking them along Another canard was that these leaders had told *Badshah Khan that whatever money he might get from India* should be handed over to them for political purposes Editorial comments appeared in a number of leading dailies asking the Government to take appropriate steps to check the chance of Indian money being smuggled into Pakistan in such

of autonomy not only for Pakhtunistan and East Bengal but also for Sind Baluchistan and even Punjab

It was said that leftists in both wings had been happy that Badshah Khan s clarification of his stand would help him in consolidating the progressive movement in the country The most important gain was that the Pakhtuns will not remain isolated but could become a force of great strength for the democratic movement In the present context of the Pathans constituting the largest single group in the Army the leverage which the Pakhtun movement could have in Pakistani politics was indeed strong

This fact had been well taken note of by the Awami League of Sheikh Mujibur Rehman He said The alliance between Pakhtuns and Bengalis is of the utmost importance for the democratic movement This could definitely tilt the balance in favour of the oppressed against the present oppressors (i e the Punjabis) '[64]

From a letter which Khan Wali Khan sent to his father during the latter s stay in India it was clear that Yahya Khan had assured Wali Khan that being himself a Pathan he was favourably inclined towards the establishment of a Pushto speaking province within the framework of Pakistan I have seen this letter which an Afghan student had brought in New Delhi

On November 28 1969 President Yahya Khan announced that Pakistan should have a democratically elected National Assembly on October 5 1970 The President in his broadcast to the nation said that the National Assembly would evolve a Constitution for the country At the same time he warned that if the Assembly failed to do so within 120 days it would be dismissed and a new National Assembly elected to accomplish the task Elections to the provincial assemblies would be held on the basis of that constitution

In this connection he blamed the political parties for the lack of a consensus on the future constitution of Pakistan He claimed this had necessitated the Martial Law authorities to resolve the constitutional deadlock He

announced that the provisional legal framework for holding the elections would be ready by March 31 1970 Electoral rolls would be ready by June but he took the first step by his decision to restore the position obtaining on the creation of Pakistan 22 years earlier It meant the restoration of the original provinces of Punjab Sind Baluchistan and North Western Frontier He promised to hold the elections on the basis of one man one vote He also indicated that the elections to the provincial a semblies would be held after the National Assembly completed its task of Constitution making He endorsed the idea to give maximum autonomy to both wings but he said that nothing should be done which would impair the unity and integrity of Pakistan[6]

The President s announcement was welcomed by all the political parties It was also hailed by the Indian Press *The Times of India* wrote General Yahya Khan has been as good as his word By fixing a firm date he has fulfilled his pledge In fact he has improved on it in two ways He has agreed to dismantle the highly unpopular one unit in West Pakistan and to hold elections on the basis of one man one vote These are important and courageous concessions becau e they represent a major departure from the position that the predominantly Punjabi power elite has taken all the e years It has been totally opposed to allowing East Pakistan s numerical superiority to be reflected in the Central Legislature There can be no doubt that the break up of the one unit and proportionate representation for East Pakistan would transform the character of the Government in Islamabad However the paper warned that it will be wrong to take an unduly optimistic view of future developments in Pakistan Past history cannot be ignored altogether in assessing the prospects of democracy there Even if the National Assembly succeeds in finishing its work within 120 days there can be no guarantee that the new Constitution will be allowed to work The Punjabi dominated officer corps and civil

service which have frustrated all attempts at democratisation in the past are said to be still intransigent It remains to be seen whether General Yahya Khan will be able to hold them to check [68]

Under the caption 'A Step Forward the *Indian Express* wrote The dissolution of One Unit by which the former Pakistani President Field Marshal Ayub Khan set so much store implies restoration of provincial autonomy as in 1947 General Yahya Khan has called it full autonomy but the people of East Pakistan as also the Pakhtoons demand something more than this They want a set-up in which the Centre will look after only defence foreign affairs and communications President Yahya Khan has recognised the genuineness of the grievance of the East Pakistanis that they do not have their full share in the decision making process on national issues They have been prevented from doing so by the principle of parity between East and West Pakistan The Pakistani President spoke in terms of maximum autonomy for the two wings not for all the five provinces Nor did he explain what he meant by maximum autonomy though his plea that nothing hould be done which would impair national integrity and solidarity is perfectly under standable [69]

Judging in the light of the President s announcement one could easily conclude that although the military junta conceded the principle of adult franchise and agreed to dismantle the one unit of West Pakistan it was clear that the President was not prepared to concede autonomy to all the provinces in West Pakistan Similarly he was not prepared to concede complete autonomy based on the six point programme of the Awami League to East Pakistan. His plea that "nothing should be done which would impair the national integrity and solidarity of Pakistan naturally implied this interpretation How could he allow the Bengalis to preside over the liquidation of the basis of the Army rule ? Probably he was optimistic due to the sharp differences of opinion among the various political parties He might have thought

that as due to the absence of one strong and popular political party in the country no one party would be able to command a decisive majority in the National Assembly In that eventuality the President would have an opportunity to play a decisive role in safeguarding the integrity of Pakistan He never thought that the supporters of Sheikh Mujibur Rehman would be able to secure a decisive majority and a number of like-minded elements in West Pakistan would join hands with them *This is substantiated by his own* utterances He was so confident of the victory of his supporters that he told newsmen in Dacca that the question of the regional autonomy had nothing to do with the general elections and that the issue had been left to the people to settle When he was reminded of the demands by Bengali leaders Maulana Bhashani Attaur Rehman and Nurul Amin that the question of regional autonomy should be settled before the elections General Yahya Khan said *This is only the demand of three persons out of the 12 crore people of Pakistan* He said that they may be representing political parties but *I shall not recognise them as peoples representatives until they come through elections* The Pakistan *President said that whatever happened during the last* 22 years before his regime it was not his responsibility[49]

The ban on political activities was lifted on January 1 1970 It was marked by a clash strikes and a procession A pro peking students organisation took out a giant torch light procession in Dacca Twenty two people were injured in a clash between the supporters of Bhashani and those of Maudoodi *There were token strikes in industrial enterprises* in Dacca and Narainganj East Pakistanis heard political news over their Government controlled radio on January 20 for the first time since martial law was clamped on the country in March 1969 First reports after the ban was lifted were speeches by Z A Bhutto Maulana Bhashani and Maulana Maudoodi Talking to newsmen at Peshawar Bhutto said his party would co-operate with other parties on the basis of a practical economic and political pro-

gramme While he pleaded for 'Islamic socialism he suggested a federal constitution and a bicameral legislature with equal status for the provinces in the Upper Houses[69]

Maulana Bhashani called for the raising of a million strong militia of workers and peasants to defend Pakistan s sovereignty He called upon the people to build up a strong movement for autonomy for East Pakistan [0]

Maulana Maudoodi leader of the Jamaat Islami told the Pakistan Pre s International (PPI) in an interview in Dacca on January 19 that his party believed in full regional autonomy for all provinces with special provision for East Pakistan in regard to allocation of foreign aid funds loans and defence allotments His party was also of view that foreign exchange earned by East Pakistan should be spent in the province[71] The Jammat however started a campaign of vilification against Mujibur Rehman and Bhashani According to him Bhashani was a Chinese agent while he dubbed Mujib as an enemy of Pakistan On January 18 violent riots broke out in Dacca when a speaker at a Jamaat Islami rally said the policies of Mujibur Rehman were inimical to Islam Hundreds of rival political supporters fought with heavy staves and the speakers platform went up in flames[7] According to other reports wielding sticks and hurling stones the crowds carried on their battle in one of the city s main streets Later the police intervened According to these reports more than 300 people were hurt 70 of them seriously during these clashes It may be recalled that on the same day i e January 19 the students of the Dacca university had organised a strike to mark the death a year before of a Bengali law student Asadullah Zaman shot by the police during riots that eventually toppled the regime of Ayub Khan The derogatory remarks of the Jamaat Islami leaders naturally hurt the feelings of the supporters of the autonomy movement The riots continued for three days On January 20 an infuriated mob set ablaze a number of shops in the city s central Kamalpur market

On March 30 President Yahya Khan issued what he called the Legal Framework Order governing elections to the National and Provincial Assemblies and laying down 'guidelines for the framing of a constitution by the National Assembly' This was followed by another order on April 2 which dissolved the one unit of West Pakistan and restored the old four provinces

The President made it clear that any constitution which the National Assembly might be able to frame should confine itself within the principles laid down in his Legal Framework Order These principles were as follows [73]

1 Firm adherence to Islamic values
2 Nothing should be done which could injure the unity and territorial integrity of Pakistan
3 Maximum autonomy for the provinces as units of a Federal Unit
4 The Federal Government shall also have adequate powers to discharge legislative administrative and financial functions to discharge its responsibilities in relation to internal and international affairs and to preserve the independence and territorial intergrity of the country
5 Complete regard for the defence needs of the country

The Legal Framework Order envisaged the formation of National Assembly of 313 members of whom 169 would come from East Bengal 85 from Punjab 28 from Sind 19 from NWFP five from Baluchistan and seven from Centrally administered Tribal Areas

The most important aspect of Yahya Khan s announcement was his stress that he as Chief Martial Law Administrator would continue to wield authority even after the framing of the Constitution He said in unmistakable term the Constitution will come into being only after it is passed and authenticated by me To remove any ambiguity the Chief Martial Law Administrator said it would be my duty to see if the Constitution framed by the Constituent Assembly fitted into the framework I have just underlined

for a constitution for the country or not He said that he could dissolve the Constituent Assembly in case the Constitution framed by it was not acceptable to him

The President was shrewd enough to provide a bait to the Constituent Assembly by saying that if it completed the work of Constitution making within the stipulated period of 120 days it could be treated as the Lower House of the National Parliament if a bicameral system was decided upon If however the decision was for a unicameral system then the Constituent Assembly could be turned into the first National Parliament. He announced that constituencies would be demarcated on the basis of the 1961 census The Provincial Assemblies he added would be elected but remain suspended till the work of constitution-making was completed

It was a disappointing announcement The Bengalis were particularly disappointed because the President had clearly given a hint that the demand for complete provincial autonomy with a weak centre would not be acceptable to him The *Ittefaq* of Dacca said that the President s reiteration of his powers to reject the Constitution framed by a popularly elected Constituent Assembly would severely disappoint all those who were *hoping for the return to parliamentary* democracy after the elections [74]

These provisions of the L F O raised a storm of controversy and protest especially in East Bengal Article 27 of the L F O stated categorically Any question or doubt as to the interpretation of any provision of the Order shall be resolved by a decision of the President and such decision shall be final and not liable to be questioned in any court Further, it stated that ' the President and not the National Assembly shall have the power to make any amendment in the Order '[75] The Awami League protested against the limitation of powers of the National Assembly Sheikh Mujibur Rehman called on the President twice in the first week of April He asked him to amend the L F O in order to ensure the sovereignty of the National Assembly

as the supreme leader of the Party kept all these groups within the organisation In the months or May, June and July the Naxalites indulged in acts of violence in Dacca and Khulna On many an occasion the followers of the two groups clashed The menace was not confined to East Bangal alone An unprecedented explosion in the middle of May near the Lahore Cantonment was taken as a signal that West Pakistan too had been affected Closely following this incident which claimed over a hundred lives was a mysterious fire in the multi storeyed building of the Water and Power Development Authority which cost about a dozen lives and over a crore of rupees [83]

The Pakistani Press reported some stray bomb incidents in Gujranwala and Lyallpur In Lahore two motor cycles were damaged in a bomb explosion early in that month West Pakistani newspapers reported mysterious display of hand written posters in red ink proclaiming slogans similar to those of Naxalites in India

Moscow threw a clear hint through a long article in the *Pravda* about the disruptionist activities of the Chinese lobby in East Pakistan It was said that the path of subversion and sabotage followed by Chinese agents in East Pakistan had clearly exposed the profession of friendship of China for Pakistan [84] The Rightist leaders suspected that conditions similar to the previous year s were being created to sabotage the coming elections

It was clear that the extremists in the National Awami Party disliked Sheikh Mujibur Rehman s coming into power Probably their counterparts in India represented their views when one of them condemned Sheikh Mujibur Rehman as India s man [85] In order to justify their position, they claimed to believe in a people s war against exploitation and imperialism However it goes to Bhashani s credit that he never questioned Mujibur Rehman s integrity It was impossible for him to resist the pressure of his so-called followers. Probably he thought that he would be able to organise a people s war Even in October he was threatening to

start a peasants struggle The situation created by the disastrous cyclone in East Pakistan in November 1970 gave him an opportunity to announce that his party would boycott the elections

Bhutto refused to enter into an alliance with any other party While he claimed to be the supporter of Islamic socialism and demanded the end of the military rule he indulged in delivering anti Indian speeches He promised his supporters to liberate Kashmir and annex Assam Tripura and many other Indian territories to Pakistan

It was said at that time that by giving East Pakistan a majority in the Constituent Assembly the President has taken some of the heat out of Sheikh Mujibur Rehman s six point charter of autonomy This means that the competition between him and Maulana Bhashani whose emphasis is on social justice rather than autonomy becomes more equal. There is less likelihood therefore of the Sheikh sweeping the polls And as seats in the eastern wing get divided there will be little chance of a Bengali party dominating the Assembly[84] In all probability Yahya Khan also relied on suchlike calculation In addition to this he thought that reactionary parties like the Jamaat Islami would be able to divide Bengali votes and the supporters of complete autonomy would not be able to assert themselves

The outbreak of communal riots in Ahmedabad Bhiwandi and Allahabad provided Bhutto Maudoodi and Abdul Qayyum with an opportunity to create communal tension in Pakistan In August 1970 more than 22 000 non Muslim Bengalis were forced to seek refuge in India The Government of India expressed serious concern over the safety of the non Muslim minorities in East Bengal Mr Samar Guha member of the Lok Sabha pointed out that under the new constitutional scheme of Pakistan the new Parliament to be elected would be strictly on the basis of population and not on the basis of parity between the eastern and western wings as had been the case earlier Representation on the basis of population would give East Pakistan a preponderance in the

future Parliament of Pakistan which the West Pakistanis did not relish. Therefore West Pakistani elements were engineering the exodus of the minorities from East Pakistan so that its population would be reduced. East Pakistan had been demanding autonomy and it was possible that Sheikh Mujibur Rehman's six point charter for East Pakistan would become irresistible. It was even possible that East Pakistan would eventually become independent.

The External Affairs Minister Sardar Swaran Singh agreed with the analysis of Mr Samar Guha (PSP) that the exodus was engineered by West Pakistani agents. Giving the latest migrations figures the Minister said since January 1 this year upto August 5 more than 1 60 000 persons belonging to the Hindu minority of East Pakistan had migrated to India. Of these 1 11,589 has been dispersed 15,571 were in camps awaiting dispersal.[86]

While Mujibur Rehman blamed this exodus on religious fanatics and reactionaries Abdul Qayyum and Maudoodi dubbed the Sheikh a traitor. At the same time President Yahya Khan made allegations against India of helping certain forces in Pakistan to harass that State.[87] Almost all the reactionary leaders competed with one another in a hate India campaign. Cries of Jehad against India were being heard with increasing frequency. Not only reckless leaders like Bhutto and Qayyum Khan started advocating a do or die line but even comparative moderate leaders like Air Marshal Noor Khan and Nawabzada Nasarullah Khan of PDP took up the anti Indian chorus. Noor Khan for example said that however unpalatable it may appear to many people there is no escape from the path of arms against India if we are serious about the liberation of Kashmir. Addressing a public meeting near Sargodha in West Pakistan Noor Khan said that just as India received a licking in 1965 a fitting answer is now required to teach her the way she should behave towards helpless minorities. The Nawabzada said India again is calling for a Mohammad Bin Qasim who can rescue hapless Muslims and teach the

Hindus a lesson [88] The President of the Pakistan Muslim League (Anti Ayub group) condemned the activities of Mujib ur Rehman and Wali Khan He warned that an international conspiracy was being hatched to establish a government of India s liking in Pakistan He added that such an attempt was being made so that Pakistan forgot all about its dispute with India He feared that certain elements within Pakistan were also a party to this dangerous game [89] The so called patriots warned Sheikh Mujib ur Rehman that he should not talk like a dictator about imposing a new regime on Pakistan If he introduced a socialist order it would result in bloodshed and he alone would be responsible for it The report added that Hashim Suleman Lakhandi President of World Muslim Welfare Association said in a statement that the Muslims of the world could not tolerate socialism He asked the Sheikh to try to understand the holy Quran and realize that an Islamic State should be set up instead of a Socialist State [90] Maulana Ghulam Ghaus Hazarvi General Secretary of the Jamait-ul Ulema addressing a meeting at Peshawar said that if his party came to power all those who failed to offer prayers would be put behind the bars He warned the supporters of socialism that we have lathis in our hands and will strike hard at the proper time [91] Maulana Abdul Khalil General Secretary of Jamaat Islam said at a public meeting in Chanpur East Pakistan that the U S A was utilising Indian agents in East Pakistan to render dis ervice to Pakistan and the employees of the U S Embassy were active visiting villages to support Sheikh Mujibur-Rehman [9] Mohammad Ali Kasuri Vice-President Pakistan Democratic Party alleged that the Awami League wanted to undo the Partition He charged the party with getting foreign money [93]

While the opponents of the Awami League were busy creating a tense atmosphere the President was trying to boost his own personality His Government secured Mirage Fighter planes from France got promise of aid from America and was able to secure Chinese economic aid and support

against India The promulgation of an *Ordinance*[94] to provide compulsory military training to every male citizen who had attained the age of 18 created a sensation throughout the country It was accompanied by allegations that India was preparing for war against Pakistan. New Delhi had already received news reports that the Pakistan Government was sending troops to East Pakistan. The Indian Defence Minister disclosed that a new armoured regiment had been inducted and additional troops were being raised He said that the Government was aware of the threat of guerilla warfare not only in Assam but also in Kashmir He said These development might be due to the internal situation there "[95]

In the meantime a severe cyclonic storm swept over the entire coastal belt and off shore islands of East Bangal on November 13 According to reports published in the Pakistani Press about two lakh human lives were lost in this hurricane Houses and crops in Sandwip and Kutubidur were completely washed away by tidal waves which went as high as 12 to 15 feet It was stated that most of the people in Sudhaman Company Ganj Ramgate and Hatia islands parished The paddy fields in Nawakhali district were seen littered with bodies and carca ses of cattle[96] The East Pakistan Press quoted BBC to disclose that the meteorological authorities in East Pakistan ignored repeated warnings from the Ameri can weather satellite of a gathering cyclone in the Bay of Bengal It was said that the United States weather satellite first took pictures of a gathering cyclone on November 6 and a warning that it was of dangerous proportions was conveyed to the Pakistani meteorological authorities on November 7 As the gathering cyclone became more mena cing the American weather administration repeated the warnings to Pakistan on each successive day until November 12[97] *The Pakistan Observer* complained that even after eight days of this grave disaster no organised efforts were being made to rush succour to the affected people There were m ny places which no official had visited The victims

who had been thrown out of their homes by the disaster were facing a life and death struggle in the absence of any relief from the Government[98] It was alleged that the top bureaucrats were active in concealing the magnitude of the loss of lives[99] According to unofficial reports received on November 20 the death toll exceeded 6,50 000 but the official agencies stated it to be only 34 000[100] Fifty two advocates of the Dacca High Court demanded a high power judicial inquiry into this bungling[101] East Pakistani students in London staged protest demonstrations in front of the Pakistan High Commission[10] The captain of a Pakistani ship was accused of having declined to rescue a number of survivors floating on the high sea 60 miles off the coast of Chittagong[103] The irony of the situation was that even at the time of this tragic disaster the opponents of the Awami League had no words of sympathy for the unfortnate Bangali people With the exception of Wali Khan no political leader from West Pakistan visited East Pakistan during those days They continued to indulge in a mud throwing campaign against Mujibur Rehman. Even the Bengali president of the Pro-Ayub Muslim League Fazul Qadir said that Rehman had adopted the Hindu slogan of Joi Bangla to dismember Pakistan[104] This enraged public opinion in Bengal Mastur Rehman General Secretary of the East Pakistan National Awami Party (Bhashani Group) warned that Gherao and Jalao would be started if the Government failed to punish the officials posted in the cyclone affected areas Bhashani withdrew his candidates from contesting the elections He accused President Yahya Khan and his cabinet of extreme callousness and apathy towards the victims of the cyclone He criticised Ministers for not visiting East Pakistan and said that they would not have done so even if 10 million people had died He threatened to organise a mass anti-Government movement and announced a five-day protest throughout the country[105] _

The Government of India offered one crore rupees for relief to the cyclone stricken people India also offered

helicopters and trucks for distribution of aid and allowed Pakistani and foreign planes carrying supplies to East Pakistan to overfly her territory The Pakistan Government hesitated The Press in West Pakistan urged the Pakistan Government not to accept this offer from its enemies [10] West Pakistani Press lost no opportunity in playing up a false report circulated by Radio Pakistan that India had refused permission to the Iranian aircraft carrying relief supplies to land at Calcutta airport for the purpose of refuelling These newspapers circulated another false report that India had started warlike preparations in her territory along the Pakistan enclaves near the Dahagram and Rangpur-Coach Bihar borders It was further reported that the East Pakistan Government had lodged a strong protest with the Government of West Bengal against such hostile and provocative activities of the Indian Army personnel [107]

Sheikh Mujibur Rehman and his colleagues went on tour in the cyclone affected areas He organised relief camps On November 26 1970 he issued a lengthy statement in which he accused the Pakistani authorities of adopting a callous attitude towards Bengalis While he appreciated the generous assistance received from abroad he said that it only underlined the tardiness and callousness of our own rulers Pakistan was enjoying a bumper wheat crop and it was ironic that the first aid of foodgrains to reach them was from abroad While they had a substantial army stationed in West Pakistan it was left to the British marines to bury our dead in Fatnakhali While foreign countries were offering us assistance within a couple of days of the disaster being made public it took our Central Government ten days to allot Rs 5 crores for relief He asked Is this why we have channellised 60% of our budget to the Defence Service ? Is this way the jute growers of Bangla Desh have starved so that the capitalists in Karachi and Lyallpur can prosper ? He added Where are those pillars of national integration those self appointed apostle of Islam Maulana Maudoodi Abdul Qayyum Khan Mian Mumtaz

Daultana, Nawabzada Nasarullah Khan and other West Pakistani leaders today? They have not found time to come even for a day to Bangla Desh to extend sympathy and succour to the survivors He said We are confirmed in our conviction today that if we are to save the people of Bangla Desh from the ravages of nature as of their fellowmen we must attain full regional autonomy on the basis of the six point formula [108]

In August Right wing group headed by the Jamaat Islami started a loud chorus that October was not a suitable month for holding elections The association with the pro-Establishment groups like the Qayyum Muslim League made it clear that postponement was round the corner All of a sudden the Chief Election Commissioner Justice Abdus Sattar said the Government was seriously thinking the request of a large number of political organisations in East Pakistan to postpone the elections As opposed to this Sheikh Mujibur Rehman and other popular leaders pointed out that postponement would only complicate matters Significantly all groups known to have sizeable following in East Bengal were opposed to postponement However the Chief Election Commissioner postponed the elections on the plea that due to heavy rain the people in the country side would not be able to participate It was decided to hold elections in December This announcement was interpretted as indication that in any confrontation with the Awami League and the Right-wing the Yahya administration would back the latter The authorities said that the floods provided a convenient pretext Sheikh Mujibur Rehman denounced this decision but the Jamaat Islami hailed it as a very wise and farsighted step The Vice-President of the Awami League in West Pakistan Sher Gul Khan said The decision to postpone elections and its approval shows that high ups were in league with the anti-people forces to throttle the struggle for democracy

In all probability this decision was made to provide more time to Right-wing groups to incite the religious sentiments of

the Muslims against the Awami League and the National Awami Party

In November the air was thick with rumours that the elections would be postponed for an indefinite period

The leaders of Jamaat Islami again demanded further postponement on account of cyclone On November 28 the *New York Times* quoted Sheikh Mujibur Rehman as warning the Pakistani Central Government that if national elections were postponed on account of cyclone damage I hall go for a total struggle for secession of East Pakistan

The *New York Times* correspondent noted that elections have already been postponed once after floods A second postponement probably would be regarded in East Pakistan as merely an excuse for continuing the present martial law *regime and with it West Pakistan domination over East* Pakistan Sheikh Mujibur Rehman told a news conference attended by the *New York Times* correspondent Our present experience has brought into sharp focus the basic truth that every Bangali has felt in his bones that we have been treated too long as a colony and a market and that we have been denied our birth right as free citizens of an inde *pendent State The feeling now prevails not just in towns* and amongst the educated bu in every village home in every lum in those islands amongst their dead that we must rule our elves The correspondent of the *New York Times* wrote Sheikh Mujibur Rehman who is expected by most observers to emerge as Pakistan s Prime Minister in any free election said he was not yet considering secession but if the polls are fru trated the people of Bengal will owe it to the million who have died to make the supreme acrifice of another million lives if need be so that we can live as free people

Almost every American news despatch had reported the feeling in East Pakistan that the Cen ral Government "which is run from West Pakistan and is controlled by the Punjabis did not press relief efforts after the cyclone and there af er proved its callousness and indifference to the plight of the

poorer and more populous East The failure of the Pakistan Government made some Americans—who have held that in developing countries military regimes are more efficient than democratic governments—question their beliefs

In view of the disaster created by the cyclone in East Pakistan the Chief Election Commissioner announced the postponement of elections for nine National Assembly and 19 Provincial Assembly seats The leaders of the National Awami Party Maulana Bhashani and the leader of the Pakistan National League Ataur Rehman Khan announced the withdrawal of their candidates from the coming general elections The Maulana said that he had no faith in elections Mr Attaur Rehman said that Mujib was the last foothold of the capitalists who wanted to thwart the people s movement for freedom [109a]

Earlier leaders of all the political parties were allowed to appear on television to explain their election manifestos While Sheikh Mujibur Rehman explained the significance of his six point programme the President of the Convention Muslim League Mr Fazlul Qudir said he favoured maximum autonomy for the provinces He said that the Hindu communalists of India had not accepted the creation of Pakistan from within their hearts India has always been trying to damage Pakistan whenever it can and in whatever way it can and end its existence so that the Muslims are forced to take refuge in India This is the unholy design for which Indian imperialism committed aggression against Pakistan in 1965 ' [109]

Nurul Amin President of the Pakistan Democratic Party said that his party stood for the restoration of real democracy and to ensure Islamic social justice He said that he wanted the Federal Parliamentary Government to assure complete autonomy to the provinces Subjects like defence foreign policy currency federal finances inter-provincial and foreign trade and communications would be with the Centre [110] Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan President of the

Pakistan Muslim League (anti Ayub group) said that his party would remove poverty He stood for a strong Centre [111] The Chief of the Pakistan Muslim League (Council) Mian Mumtaz Daultana said his party was determined to ensure observance of the Islamic way of life. He stood for democracy without its and buts pretences or prevarications He was pledged to stop the flight of capital from East Pakistan to bring at par the effective fighting and fire power of the defence services in the two wings and to shift the Naval Headquarters to East Pakistan He sought similar parity in all services and the central establishment for East Pakistan [11]

Maulana Bhashani said that the new constitution could acquire popular sanction only if it was framed with a view to safeguarding specifically the interests of workers and peasants He was of the view that such a constitution could be framed if representation was given in the National Assembly on population basis to workers peasants and low paid employees who constituted 90 per cent of the population He said I hope through the ensuing elections the problems of education food and clothing flood control regional autonomy for both wings of Pakistan will be solved intergrity of Pakistan will be strengthened welfare will be brought to the people of Pakistan, and goodwill and love between the two wings of Pakistan will increase He was full of praise for the Pakistani army for having defended the sovereignty of the country by showing exampIary courage and bravery during the 1965 war However he hoped that the armed forces will not have to be frquently called out for administrative purposes in a democratic country because the responsibilty of the armed forces is to defend the country [113]

Mr A.S.M *Suleman President of Krishak Sramic* Party did not touch the quetion of provincial autonomy He wanted a democratic society based on the principles of Islam in which there was no exploitation. He said that the

country should have a federal government and the constituent provinces should be known as States like other countries having a federal type of government.[114]

Maulana Maudoodi Chief of the Jamaat Islami said that he wanted to establish an Islamic society on the foundations of the Islamic principles as explained in the Quran He was opposed to socialism but supported the Islamic principles of justice He supported internal autonomy for the provinces but wanted to have a strong centre He is reported to have said in a press conference at Lahore that the Jamaat, if returned to power would ban music because the Holy Prophet had *stated that the destruction of musical instrument* was included in his mission [11]

The election manifesto of the Jamaat Islami demanded Pakistan s withdrawal from the SEATO and CENTO and the removal of all Western influence, particularly American The Maulana in public speeches also denounced the Americans for what he called persistenly anti Islamic policy pursued by policy makers in Washington However the Maulana was out to fight against the forces of socialism and ecularism which he condemned as enemies of Islam Writing editorially in his paper he said Conditions in Pakistan are almost like those which prevailed in Indonesia in 1965 If the pro Islamic forces do not act in time there is every possibility that a conspiracy by anti God and pro communist *elements* would *succeed in* Pakistan *even though it* was crushed in Indonesia '[116]

The Chairman of the People s Party of Pakistan (PPP) Mr Bhutto said that he stood for I lamic socialism He stood for a strong Centre and strengthening of Pakistan s relations with socialist and anti imperialistic countries He supported Kashmir s fight for freedom The Pakistan Democratic Front led by Mohammad Ali Kasuri and Nurul Amin supported provincial autonomy Maulana Ghulam Ghaus Hazarvi President of Jamait e Ulema e Islam stood for the establishment of an Islamic State Air Marshal Asghar Khan, Chairman of Tehrik e Istiqlul, supported the

conception of provincial autonomy *G M Syed Chairman* of the Sind United Front supported the conception of provincial autonomy *He stood for socialism*

While Bhutto criticised the Awami leaders he himself *was the target of almost all the other political parties* Lt General Sarfraz Khan a *newly initiated leader of the* right wing of the P D P said Bhutto was in *the pay of the CIA He demanded an enquiry into the financial assets of* Bhutto and challenged *him to face an independent enquiry to disprove the allegation that he was an American agent*.[117]

Mehmood Ali Kasuri who had joined the People s Party *created a sensation by disclosing that America* was heavily financing the election campaign of *some of the parties* especially the Qayyum Muslim League and the Jamaat Islami. *Giving a concrete instance Kasuri pointed out that only* recently a private loan amounting to over Rs *70 lakhs* was given by an unknown American firm to a political and business non entity a certain *Malik Noor Hayat Khan* Noor Hayat Khan s only qualification was that he was a *relation of Qayyum who was considered as the main political* agent of Yahya Khan This loan *was supposed to have been* given without any project report or any other *formalities* being *completed* A *more scandalous aspect* of the so-called loan was that it had been provided *on a completely* untied *basis leaving the recipient to decide the way the money was to be spent It* was significant that in spite of repeated demands for a thorough enquiry into the circumstances leading to the granting of this loan *the* Government dismissed *the whole affair as* merely a private transaction [118]

Almost all the reactionary and opportunist parties in West Pakistan were opposed to the Awami League While their leaders dubbed Sheikh Mujibur Rehman as a traitor they were busy in organising para military groups to fight again t the enemies of Islam While Major General Umrao Khan organised *such a force for the Jamaat Islami* Major-General Akbar Khan announced *that* over a lakh of educated young men had already offered *to join the "People s Force*

sponsored by Bhutto Shorash Kashmiri a well-known Urdu journalist of Lahore organised a Sarfarash Tanzim (Suicide Squad) Members of the organisation were supposed to get high quality training for self defence by retired military officials and were professedly being recruited to eliminate all anti Pakistan and anti Indian elements such as socialists secularists and the regionalists According to a claim made in *Chattan* the Tanzim had already enrolled over 10 000 volunteers spread all over West Pakistan.

The National Awami Party (Wali Khan Group) announced the formation of a 'Red Shirt organisation to defend its public meetings and processions from fascist violence Maulana Bhashani s National Awami Party had already organised a large group of young men under the name of Red Volunteers[119]

Following in the foot steps of Air Marshal Asghar Khan Air Marshal Noor Khan General Azam Khan and a number of other former officers of the Pakistan Army were anxious to capture the political power While serving generals were struggling to maintain their control over the administration the retired ones decided to play a key role in the opposition Major General Fazal Maqueim and Major-General Umarao Khan joined the ranks of Jamaat Islami to fight against the enemies of Islam The former was considered to be very close to ex President Ayub Khan who had entrusted him to write the official history of the Pakistan Army He now took upon himself the task of organising the para military volunteer group of the Jamaat Islami They declared their bitter opposition to all foreign and anti Pakistan ideas like secularism socialism and Hindu-cultural influences[120]

Major General Sarfaraz Khan whose name was woven into the myth of his having been a great soldier as a defender of Lahore in the 1965 war joined the Pakistan Democratic Party[121]

While General Azam Khan joined the Council Muslim League, Major General Ghulam Jailani a relation of Ayub

Whatever the substance of this news might be all these leaders excluding Ayub Khan met together

It seems that while the Sheikh appreciated Wali Khan s gesture and was prepared to discuss political co operation with Bhutto after the elections he was opposed to any poll alliance As Bhutto was aspiring to become the next Prime Minister he wanted to have adjustment of seats in East Bengal The Sheikh refused to oblige him Bhutto had already announced that his party would contest all the seats for the National Assembly from West Pakistan and would put up candidates for most of the seats in East Bengal [1 4]

In the last week of November 1970 President Yahya Khan reached Dacca He had just completed his State visit to China The Chinese leaders had assured him of substantial economic aid and supported Pakistan s views on the Kashmir problem Flushed with this victory the President warned the politicians that if the elected representatives of the people refused to accept the LFO (the Legal Framework Order) based on the Five Principles as far as I am concerned I will take it that they have not taken part in the elections Martial Law continues and it shall continue

The President charged India with not yet reconciling itself to our separate existence Explaining his conception of provincial autonomy the President said East Pakistan must have complete autonomy within the overall framework of one Pakistan His Government he claimed had recognised the fact that the so called strong centre would be a meaningless concept unless the one wing of the country separated by hundreds of miles of hostile territory and inhabited by the majority of the population did not have adequate powers of self government

It had therefore been decided to grant the maximum autonomy to East Pakistan as it was imperative that the people of this wing should have more say in the affairs of the country They must have the full control of

their distiny and should take full charge of planning and utilisation of resources

On a question about the tendency of separatism in East Pakistan the President said that the East Pakistanis were in a majority How can a majority separate itself from a minority' he asked Asked to comment on the six point programme of the Awami League the President retorted that he would go by his own five points reflected in the Legal Framework Order

He made it clear that the proposed National Assembly would not be a sovereign body 'The sovereignty of the National Assembly he emphasised will come only when I have handed over power Until then everything is under the covered umbrella of Martial Law[1] The President reiterated this warning on December 3 four days before the country s first general elections since the establishment of Pakistan In a broadcast to the nation he said that sovereignty would come to people only on the conclusion of the last pha e of his plan The framing of the Consti tution he said would be the first phase of this plan and he expected that the Constitution would be framed within his Legal Framework Order Addressing those who would constitute the Assembly the President said that they should usefully employ the period between the election and the first meeting of the Assembly to get together and arrive at a consensus on the provisions of the Constitution That would call for a spirit of give and take

Although the elections had nothing to do with India the President in his message to the nation attacked India s attitude on the Kashmir and Farakka disputes While he boas ted of having strengthened friendly relations with China and the Soviet Union he said that India was the only country with which Pakistan s relations were not expanding[16]

This was a clear warning to the supporters of the six point programme for complete provincial autonomy The President s statement meant that he had already made up his mind about the future constitutional set up of Pakistan

the Sindhi intellectuals were proud of their culture There was a consistent clamour for the revival of the secular culture of Sind There was even a Jai Sind movement by students with the object of reviving their composite culture The nationalists elements in Baluchistan hated Punjabi domination Naturally Baluch leaders like Abdus Samad Khan Prince Abdul Karim and Sardar Bagti had joined hands with Wali Khan Even the Urdu speaking refugee population of Karachi had started looking to the Sheikh Their leaders demanded a separate autonomous province of Karachi [12]

The Punjabi leaders including Daultana and Air Marshal Noor Khan were opposed to Pathan domination They openly accused the Dictator of having deprived the due share of the Punjab in the services It was said that although the Punjabis continue to provide the bulk of men to the country s armed forces the present leadership is heavily dominated by the Pathans A political commentator wrote

> It appears to be a calculated move on the part of the Pathan leaders of the army to make an informal united front with other non Punjabi officers so that the Punjabi hegemony could be broken It is not an accident that out of the 13 top posts held by the military officers in the administration of the country only three have gone to the Punjabis Out of the five provincial Governors only one belongs to Punjab Except for the Chief of the Air Force there is no Punjabi representative on General Yahya Khan s supreme command of Martial Law The Punjab itself has been placed under the Urdu speaking refugee officer Lt General Atiqur Rehman The Martial Law Administrator for the Punjab is a Pathan [13]

All these elements were opposed to Bhutto and Qayyum Khan Probably the Dictator never thought that these elements could come to an understanding with the Bengalis

It may be recalled that Air Marshal Noor Khan who was forced to resign from the Governorship of the Punjab

a true Muslim[130] In order to provoke the Bengalis India was charged with conspiring to starve the Bengalis by refusing to concede Pakistan s demands about the Farrakka Barrage[131]

While the West Pakistani leaders were bitterly criticis ing the six point programme of the Awami League the Sheikh received a number of threatening letters from West Pakistan A foreign news agency hinted this in a despatch which ran thus

The man regarded as having the largest political follow ing in East Pakistan Sheikh Mujibur Rehman 48-year-old Awami League leader glumly considers assassination when he talks of his first campaign trip to West Pakis tan a journey he has postponed four times since the army rulers lifted the ban on political campaigning in January last

If anyone kills me it will be the emancipation of my people he said in an interview, referring to the danger of a split between East and West Pakistan[13]

Sheikh Mujibur Rehman censured those who were malig ning him and his party as traitors to Islam Addressing a large public meeting he said the cry of Islam by a section of Ulema was meant only to deceive people when they were struggling to get back their rights through elections The cry of Islam he said was meant to continue the exploitation of Bengal He diplored that Bengalis despite their majority had been denied their due share in administration and other spheres and said that mirjafars of Bengal were more responsible than West Pakistanis for the poor plight of Bengalies He urged people to weed out what he called political parasites through the coming elections and get united to fight out their case in the assembly[133]

It may be recalled that the Sheikh had made his position clear about Kashmir and the Farakka Barrage in his speeches He said We emphasise the importance of a just settlement of the Kashmir dispute in accordance with the U N resolution The threat to the economy of Bengal posed

by the construction of the Farakka Barrage must be immediately met [134]

Two significant events marked the closing of the election campaign The leader of the National Awami Party, Maulana Bhashani issued a statement on December 7 calling for an independent State of East Pakistan with at best a loose federation with sovereignty of the State [135]

Addressing a gathering of about 50 000 the biggest in the recent history of the town of Bhola he said that the 1965 war with India and the last cyclone had opened our eyes that West Pakistan could not come to our aid in case of need—and this was rightly admitted during the framing of the Lahore Resolution He called upon Sheikh Mujibur-Rehman and others to join him in his last fight for freedom of East Bengal and no to run after the mirage of election for power under the dictation and control of these tyrants and betrayers to East Pakistan s legitimate and just cause [136]

The Pakistan Government charged the Indian Army with invading the Pakistani enclave of Batrigach and killing the Muslim population there. Undoubtedly it was an election gimmick but the Pakistan Press and radio stations were bent upon rousing anti Indian sentiments *The Dawn* alleged that it was a deliberate and pre planned killing of the Bengalis *The Pakistan Times* contended that the incident was a naked and unprovoked piece of aggression" The paper allowing its imagination to run riot said that the invading thugs roasted little children alive and kidnapped young Muslim girls [137] A story was invented that the Indian authorities had refused to allow a relief team from Pakistan to enter Batrigach The Urdu papers notably *Jung* *Mashriq Imroze* and *Nawai Waqt* said that it was a regular attack on Pakistan It was alleged that it was the biggest attack on Pakistani territory by Indian aggre sors since the September 1965 war [138] *The Nidai Millat* of Lahore sa-d that India had tried to strike at the roots of Pakistan exacti at the time when the Bengalis had undergone one of th greatest tragedies of human histor[illegible] force

were busy in saving the lives of millions of unfortunate Bengalis [139] It is difficult to understand the motive behind Bhashani's statement Whether he demanded the establishment of an Independent State of Bengal out of political frustration or it was a political manoeuvre to strengthen Mujibur Rehman's hands in political bargaining in the next few days As a shrewed political observer he might have foreseen that the Dictator would never concede the Awami League's demands and in that case the people must be prepared to launch a final struggle Anyhow the Maulana and none else could provide a satisfactory answer to this question.[140] However one thing was crystal clear The Dictator through his Legal Framework Order had already made up his mind that he would not in any circumstances concede complete autonomy to Bengal as envisaged in the six point charter of the Awami League

It may be recalled that the National Awami Party (Bhashani and Muzaffar Ahmed Groups) in East Bengal had already decided to boycott the elections The National Progressive League headed by Attaur Rehman had similarly decided not to put up its candidates on the ground that the proposed Constituent Assembly would neither be free nor sovereign in framing the Constitution Ex Justice S M Murshid also decided to boycott the elections on the same ground Sheikh Mujibur Rehman was under heavy pressure from a large number of his colleagues and workers who wanted to prepare the masses to launch a mass struggle for autonomy However the Sheikh refused to change his mind He believed in a constitutional struggle He did not believe in violence The Press in East Pakistan reported that as a protest against the decision to fight elections under the bogus system outlined in the Legal Framework Order a large number of district level workers including the provincial treasurer have joined the National Progressive League organised by Attaur Rehman

Amena Begum an prominent leader of the Awami League was one of these rebels She opposed Sheikh Mujibur

Rehman from Dacca North-East Constituency as a candidate of the newly formed Bangla National League She was however defeated by more than one lakh and twenty thousand votes She also lost her deposit

The elections gave a landslide victory to the Awami League It ecured 160 seats out of 162 reserved for East Bengal in the National Assembly and polled 72 6 per cent of the total votes cast in East Bengal in the elections to the National Assembly The Awami League secured an absolute majority in the National Assembly Out of a total 300 elected seats it was able to capture 160 which gave it 53.3 per cent of the seats in the National Assembly Out of the two seats lost one went to ex Chief Minister Nurul Amin (Pakistan Democratic Front) and the other to Chukma Raja Tridev Roy an Independent from the Chittagong Hill Tracts Later both these leaders announced their decision to support the six point programme of the Awami League.[141]

The Awami League won a second massive mandate with the capture of all but eight seats of the provincial legislature

In West Pakistan Bhutto s People s Party emerged as the largest group in the National Assembly It won 81 of the 136 seats reserved for West Pakistan in the National Assembly It captured three-fourths of the seats in the Punjab and two thirds of the seats in Sind The final party position that emerged in the National Assembly was as follows [142]

Total seats	—300
Awami League	—160
People s Party	— 81
P M L (Qayyum)	— 9
C M L (Daultana)	— 7
Jamait e-Islam (Ahle Sannat)	— 7
Jamait e-Islam (Hazarvi)	— 7
N A P (Wali)	— 6
Jamaat Islami	— 4

P M L (Convention)	—	2
P D P	—	1
Independents	—	16

Later one of the Independent members joined the People s Party

In the provincial elections held in the western wing the National Awami Party led by Wali Khan emerged as the largest group in N W F P with 12 out of the 39 seats filled A close second was the Muslim League faction of Qayyum Khan with 10 seats Qayyum won a seat in the National Assembly but he was defeated in the provincial elections Bhutto s group secured only three seats The People s Party won 173 seats out of 180 reserved for the Punjab Assembly Daultana s Muslim League won six seats The People s Party won 33 seats out of 59 seats reserved for the Sind Assembly The National Awami Party emerged as the single largest group in Baluchistan.[115]

While Sheikh Mujibur Rehman successfully contested for two seats Bhutto won five out of the six constituencies from where he contested He lost to Mufti Mahmood of the Jamiat e-Ulama e Islam (Hazarvi group) in Dera Ismail Khan Constituency

In East Bengal those who were routed included the Convention Muslim League Chief Fazlul Qadir Chaudhuri Professor Muzaffar Ahmed (NAP Wali Group) Provincial Jamaat Islami Chief Professor Ghulam Azam Provincial Muslim League Chief (Daultana Group) Khwaja Khairuddin Provincial Qayyum Muslim League Chief Hashimuddin Provincial Tehrik-e Istiqlal Chief Mukhesuzzaman and Provincial NAP Chief B D Habibullah former Central Ministers Waterduz Zaman Abdullah al Mahmood and Provincial Congress Chief Manoranjan Dhar

In West Pakistan all the former Generals including Asghar Khan Umrao Khan Sarfraz Khan and Mohammed Sayeed were routed Two former Chief Secretaries of East Bengal, N M Khan and M Khurshid also suffered defeat

The Awami League's thumping victory gave a severe shock to West Pakistani leaders and rulers who had earlier calculated that the Awami League would not be able to secure an absolute majority with the result that Sheikh Mujibur Rehman would have to come down in order to form a coalition Government However the situation arising out of the Government's apathy towards the victims of the disastrous cyclone long standing resentment against West Pakistan's domination over East Bengal and reactionary elements threatening speeches against Bengali leadership had changed the whole atmosphere Added to this the withdrawal of Bhashani and Attaur Rehman groups from the elections strengthened the hands of the Awami leaders Thus the Awami League emerged victorious and it was generally acclaimed that the elections were a sort of referendum on the six point programme of the Awami League *The Pakistan Times* and The *Dawn* agreed that it was a people's victory[144] Sheikh Mujibur Rehman declared that he would now get down to framing a constitution which would guarantee full regional autonomy on the basis of his party's six point formula Such a constitution, he said had to be framed and implemented in all aspects Referring to the resounding victory of the Awami League he said that this verdict of the people was in fact a referendum on his party's six-points and 11 points of the students He said It is a victory of the suffering millions of Bangla Desh He called on the awakened masses in West Pakistan to support us in realising the deeply cherished aspirations of their Bengali brothers He assured them of his support in their struggle to emancipate themselves from the oppression of the feudal lords and other vested interests[145]

Qayyum Khan Bhutto and other extremists in West Pakistan were not prepared to tolerate this situation Abdul Qayyum's right hand man in Baluchistan Mir Nabi Baksh Zahri addressing a Press Conference in Quetta deplored the attitude of the new generation which by electing the chief of the Awami League from East Bengal with an over

whelming majority had rested into his hands the dictatorial powers and thrown to the winds the Islamic Ideology on which Pakistan had come into being under the leadership of the Quaid-e-Azam"[158] Bhutto said he wanted "a negotiated settlement with the Awami leader on vital constitutional issues"[157] While he did not explain these "vital issues" at this stage he told Peter Hazelhurst of *The Times* (London) that "East Bengal could get constitutional rights to trade with India provided Sheikh Mujibur Rehman was willing to accept the Kashmir issue as a national issue"[158] Bhutto was referring to Mujibur Rehman's statements in which he had said that due to the economic conditions prevailing in East Bengal he was in favour of lifting the trade barriers with India In the last week of January 1971 Bhutto issued another statement in which he said that "full regional autonomy to East Bengal as envisaged in the Lahore Resolution of the Muslim League could not be granted because Assam and Bengal were not included within Pakistan in 1947 Instead the two provinces were divided"[159]

Abdul Qayyum was also perturbed over the Awami League's dominating position He criticised the Awami League's intention to frame the constitution on the basis of six-point formula In a statement issued to the Press he said that the country would face civil war if a constitution framed by one province was imposed[160] In another statement he said that his party would not attened the National Assembly session in view of the "unbending" attitude of Mujibur Rehman on the six point programme[161]

In the beginning the President refrained from expressing any opinion which might have objected to by the Bengali leaders He even sent congratulatory messages to the leaders of the winning parties In a statement issued in Rawalpindi he called upon the Assembly members to honour their commitments to the electorate who he said had reposed their confidence in the policies and programmes of their parties[162] In the second week of January 1971, the President went to

Dacca Sheikh Mujibur Rehman met him twice Though the details of the talks were not disclosed the President said that Sheikh Mujibur Rehman was going to be the future Prime Minister of Pakistan The two leaders hoped that the National Assembly would soon be convened to meet in Dacca [153]

The leaders of the Jammat Islami were still attacking the six-point programme The Rajshahi division branch of the Jamaat Islami formed a North Bengal Province Movement Committee to launch a movement for a seperate province in the North [1 4] Maulana Mufti Mahmud Hussain leader of the Jamai ul Ulema e Pakistan demanded recognition of Urdu as the only national language of Pakistan [1]

In the meantime Maulana Bhashani had launched a movement for the establishment of an independent Sovereign State of East Pakistan He called upon all people and parties to support the struggle for the establishment of sovereign independent East Pakistan on the basis of the Lahore Resolution He said that during the previous 22 years much was tolerated in the name of Islam and nationalism Now the time and circumstances and the two-nation theory had to be adjusted in the light of re examination He said that at best we can have a loose federation with sovereignty of the States [156]

While Sheikh Mujibur Rehman insisted on implementation of his six point programme Bhutto was opposed to it He knew that Sheikh Mujibur Rehman would be able to secure support from a number of members belonging to the Punjab Sind Baluchistan and the N W F P The Sheikh was in a position to ignore Bhutto and form a coalition cabinet In order to forestall this development Bhutto was bent upon *recognition of his veto power*

It may be recalled that the President was insisting on consultation between Bhutto and Mujib before the convening of the National Assembly while Mujib insisted on holding the session to draft the constitution After meeting

Mujib the President met Bhutto in Larkana A few days before this meeting the President told a Press Conference that the people have given their decision in favour of the majority parties'[157] This meant that Mujib would have to come to an understanding with Bhutto It was clear from this statement that the President would not allow the Awami League to frame a constitution of its liking Bhutto thus got the power of veto to sabotage the Awami formula He boasted that Punjab and Sind (where he got a decisive majority) were bastions of power in Punjab[158] To this Tajuddin Ahmed General Secretary of the Awami League restorted that the elections had done away with such bastions of power

Bhutto met the Sheikh in the last week of January 1971 The meeting ended in a deadlock because Bhutto was not prepared to accept the six point formula of the Awami League He was particularly opposed to the two points relating to the transfer of control over taxation foreign exchange and foreign trade to the provinces Bhutto *was of the view that it these subjects were taken over* from the Centre, the Centre would find it impossible to pursue an effective foreign policy Moreover *he insisted that his party must share power* with the Awami League and the Sheikh should accept in principle that the constitution could not be adopted without the *approval of his party* While the Awami League insisted that the Assembly should be called into session not later than February 15 1971 Bhutto insisted on political settlement as *a first step* He was not intere ted in an early session of the Assembly Army leaders and big businessmen in Pakistan naturally endorsed his views Army leader were opposed *to the six point programme* of the Awami League and they had expres ed this opinion even as far back as 1969[159] It is wrong to assume that the President was favourably inclined *towards the Sheikh* I think there was no difference among the ruling junta on this point The Legal Framework Order issued by the President was clear and emphatic on this point

Expressing concern at Bhutto s suspected conspiracy in the blowing up of the Indian plane the paper said Knowing fully well the implication of the Awami League s parliamentary majority Mr Bhutto, in conspiracy with other West Pakistan politicians has lent support to this senseless action of the hijackers so that Pakistan and India are locked in another bloody conflict Should such a contingency arise, this would obviously dynamite the process of constitution making and transfer of power to the people [161]

Sheikh Mujibur Rehman Mr Tajuddin (who now heads the Bangla Desh Government as its Prime Minister) and four prominent leaders of the Dacca University Central Students Union urged the Government to take effective measures to prevent interested quarters from exploiting this situation for their nefarious ends [162]

As the Pakistan Government had refused to hand over the two culprits to India the Indian Government banned Pakistani aircraft flights over its territories Pakistani rulers along with Bhutto started an anti India propaganda campaign Bhutto s party organised processions in which the hijackers too participated The processionists raised slogans against India and the Sheikh In Lahore the supporters of Bhutto attacked the offices of the Awami League [163] A spokesman of the Pakistan Government assured the hijackers whom he called freedom fighters that it would support their demand for release of Plebiscite Front workers arrested in Kashmir [164] The puppet President of the so called Azad Kashmir Government said that a war against India was about to start [165] The Press in West Pakistan published fictitious reports about slaughter of Muslims in Srinagar It was further alleged that the Hindus were preparing to kill the Muslims in Delhi[166]

The Sheikh knew that a situation was being created to sabotage his plan Immediately after Bhutto s departure from Dacca the Sheikh told newsmen that while he was anxious to seek co-operation from Bhutto and others he and his party were committed to the people to give them a

constitution on the basis of his six points that the Assembly should be convened at the earliest moment so that a constitution was framed and a civilian government came in without delay[167] In another statement he said that his party was in a majority in Pakistan and it could frame a constitution but still sought the co operation of others He said If anyone refuses to co operate it will be his responsibility He warned 'Pakistan s politics is the politics of conspiracy and intrigue. Conspiracy has not yet stopped it is still going on But since the Bengalis have learnt to shed blood none can stop them any more We must frame the constitution on the basis of the six points [168]

In the meantime an attempt to murder Sheikh Mujibur Rehman on January 1 1971 spread the wave of anger throughout the province Mr Tajuddin Ahmed General Secretary of the Awami League in a press statement in Dacca on February 9 said A young man was caught while he was pressing his way inside the residence of Sheikh Mujibur Rehman on the plea of having a private talk with him He had a sharp dagger concealed on his person After he was hauled up he disclosed that he went there with the mission of killing Sheikh Sahib He further disclosed that he was commissioned for this purpose by an organi ed gang which gave him training and instructions for inflicting a mortal injury on Mujib Sahib to bring an end to his life

Mr Tajuddin Ahmed added

It also transpired from him that a very powerful organised network is in action in different places to seize an opportunity to kill the Awami League Chief The young man gave out his identity as Ghulam Mustafa alias Kalim son of Saddiqur Rehman of village Durlavpur District Comila

Sheikh Mujibur Rehman, addressing a public meeting at Mathbaria (Barisal) said

The attempt on my life is in pursuance of a conspiracy to kill me Already our enemies have killed my party s

MPA elect from Patna the late Rafiqul Ahmed and a party worker in Khulna I warn these reactionaries that the people will not tolerate political murders

The Sheikh advised his party volunteers to get themselves armed with bamboo sticks [169] He said people who lost in the elections were mistaken to think that they could deliver the goods to the country by killing people like thieves and dacoits in the darkness of night [170]

Bhutto was still bent upon confusing the whole atmosphere with an anti Indian bogey His spokesman the cricket player Kardar announced that he would not allow the Indian foot ball team to come to Lahore India s ban on Pakistan aircrafts flight over her territory led to anti Indian demonstrations and attacks on the building of the Indian High Commission in Islamabad This created panic among minorities A number of Hindu families in Sind were forced to leave Pakistan [171] Bhutto assured the so called National Liberation Front that his Government would help in liberating the valley

The President took a further step to prove his bonafides On February 13 he announced that the National Assembly would meet at Dacca on March 3 He said that the National Assembly should complete the framing of the Constitution by June 20 [172]

Although the announcement was apparently the first victory of the Awami League it was clear that the President had not cancelled the so called Legal Framework Order A foreign observer warned that the President had already interpreted his order He said "The Constitution is not an ordinary piece of legislation but it is an agreement to live together It is therefore essential that all regions are reasonably satisfied with the voting procedure [173]

On the same day PTI reported from Agartala Pakistan s army movement in the border areas of East Bengal [174]

Bhutto and Abdul Qayyum threatened to boycott the National Assembly in a bid to force Sheikh Mujibur Rehman to give up his demand for full provincial autonomy Bhutto

announced that if the Assembly met without his party he would launch a mass movement from Khyber to Karachi He said that it was not possible for him to accept a position which undermined the solidarity and sovereignty of the country A H Peerzada President of the Karachi PPP said that the members of the N A belonging to his party had agreed to hand over resignations from N A to Mr Bhutto He said We reaffirm the party s stand vis a vis a Constitution based on the six point programme The National Awami Party (Wali Khan Group) Jamait ul Ulema-e Islam (Hazarvi group) and the Council Muslim League deplored Bhutto s attitude and announced that they would take part in framing the Constitution[17] Bhutto warned Yahya Khan and the members of other West Wing parties that anyone who goes to Dacca from West Pakistan in khaki or in black and white does so at his own risk[176]

At this stage Council Muslim League leader former Air Marshal Noor Khan offered to mediate He met the President and the Sheikh

Bhutto rejected the offer of mediation He roared

There are three forces in the country—the Awami League, The Pakistan People s Party and the Armed Forces We don t recognise any fourth power[177]

This clearly meant that he wanted the Army to play its role as a decisive factor and force the Sheikh to water down his demands and to include Bhutto s party as a partner in the Cabinet or face the consequences of continuation of Martial Law However it seems the Army was still not in a position to take such a risk at this stage The President was moving very cautiously so as not to give any impression that he supported Bhutto s point of view On February, 19 Bhutto met the President at his invitation Nobody knows what transpired at this meeting However the Press reported that Bhutto had climbed down from his stand and agreed to co operate with Sheikh Mujibur Rehman on the basis of the Awami League s six point programme with some adjustments on matters relating to

currency foreign trade and taxation ' He said that he was keeping the doors open and would be happy to meet the Sheikh once again While maintaining that his stand to boycott the Assembly session was unshakable he said he felt if there was room for adjustments and a viable Constitution could be worked out he would not stand on formality but would go to Dacca

He tried to create a sensation by telling his followers that if anything happened to him in this period of stress and tension he considered two youthful members of his party Mr Mustapha Khan and Mr Mirza Mohammad Khan as among his successors Mirza Khan according to him was one of the revolutionary forces outside the parliamentary party

He still believed that he could divert the people s attention from the basic problems He said

> Pakistan and India are facing each other eyeball to eyeball and it could lead to another Indian aggression The Indo-Pakistan situation was very serious India s naked aggression in the past had always been made against the border of West Pakistan not that of East Pakistan Because of the tension with India on the West Pakistan border it will not be appropriate for members of my party to stay away from their families to attend the meeting of Assembly in Dacca [173]

The question naturally arises whether Bhutto created the bogey of the danger of Indian aggression simply to create panic in East Bengal or the Pakistani rulers were actually prepared for a showdown with India to divert the Bengalis attention from their movement for autonomy I think Pakistani rulers were preparing for a confrontation. It was for this purpose that Pakistan was procuring armaments on a very large scale However the fast deteriorating situation in East Bengal prevented her from embarking upon such an adventure

It is significant to note that on the same date i.e. February 12 the Government of India received reports of

troop movement in Pakistan It was further reported that the Pakistan Government had cancelled the Army horse-show in Lahore The Government of India summoned its High Commissioner in Islamabad to New Delhi for urgent discussions[179] The President had already issued an Ordinance to impart military training to all young men in West Pakistan The idea behind these moves was to spare enough forces to crush down the people of East Bengal because intelligence reports had already indicated that the loyalty of the Bengali police and Army was in doubt Bhashani was busy in delivering fiery speeches While addressing a large gathering at Chittagong the Maulana declared that he would launch a jail-breaking movement to release all political prisoners[180] In Dacca and elsewhere anti Government demonstrations were held

On February 18 the Chinese Communications Minister Yang Chien said in Rawalpindi that China was committed to support Pakistan against imperialism and expansionism[181] This was a green signal to the Army junta that in case of any complication in its intention to crush the Bengalis Pakistan could count on Chinese help

The Governor of East Bengal Admiral Ahsan was summoned to Islamabad to attened a meeting of Provincial Governors It is said that his attitude towards the Sheikh was sympathetic As against Bhashani and other extremists he was favourably inclined to the Sheikh He was kept in the dark about the real intentions of the junta Being a Bengali he could not have been trusted On February 13 he reached Dacca He told reporters at the airport that the Sheikh was a respected leader of Pakistan He said he had brought Yahya Khan's good wishes and warm regards to the Sheikh[182]

Bhutto created a sensation when he demanded postponement of the Assembly's session and said it was necessary to hold negotiations between the Awami Party and his party to explore the possibility of a compromise.[183] Eight other West Pakistani parties which held 26 votes opposed this

demand They said that the Assembly should be allowed to start the *framing of the Constitution Even the leader* of the Jammat Islami Maulana *Maudoodi said* that the Awami League's basis for a Constitution should be thoroughly examined in the Assembly instead of outside the House He said that the majority party not only had the *right to frame a Constitution but also that to form a Government*[181] As against this Bhutto threatened to organise a complete hartal in West Pakistan[18] The Sheikh said that he was opposed to a bicameral federal legislature The creation of an Upper House he said could turn East Pakistan's *majority into a minority He made it clear that he* never wanted to impose his plan on West Pakistan He said that all members of the National Assembly should attend the session discuss and frame a Constitution and if any individual member made any reasonable proposal it would be *accepted He said that* Pakistan would continue to stay and so would Bangla Desh the Punjab Sind NWFP and Baluchistan What would cease to exist would be exploitation of man by man [186]

Explaining the position of his party the Sheikh said *The Awami League has certain responsibilities towards the* people of Bangla Desh He however has no desire to impose the six point programme on West Pakistan If the provinces in West Pakistan do not want the same degree of autonomy as desired by us and if they want to give more powers to *the Centre or set up regional institutions the six points of* the Awami League will not come in the way [187]

On February 28 the Awami League named the Sheikh leader of the legislative wing The Party elected Mr Nazrul Islam deputy leader Mr Qamruzaman Secretary and Mr *Yunas Khan Chief Whip* After eleven days the party began a review of the draft Constitution prepared by it The President had already sent him good wishes through the provincial Governor Vice-Admiral *S M* Ahsan At about 9 p m on February 28 the Sheikh received a sealed letter from one of his trusted officers in the provincial government. The

letter revealed that Bhutto had threatened to launch a violent agitation on March 2 if the elections for the womens seats of the Assembly were held on that day Bhutto had asked the people to take full revenge from the members who had chosen to attend the Assembly session He said

> If the people failed to take revenge his party itself would take action against them If any member of his own party attended the meeting the party workers would liquidate him [183]

The Sheikh called an urgent meeting of his trusted colleagues The meeting went on till 1 30 A M

On the next day when the Sheikh finalised the list of candidates for the women s seats in the National Assembly the Chief Election Commissioner said in Dacca that the election of women members from West Pakistan was being deferred because of the uncertain situation The Sheikh had just taken his dinner He asked his personal assistant to arrange a meeting for him with the Governor At that time the radio was relaying music Abruptly the music stopped and the listeners were told that the President was to make a very important announcement. Within a few seconds the President was heard to announce that he had postponed the session of the National Assembly indefinitely

The Sheikh was stunned He murmured This is a conspiracy

There was another shock The radio said Vice President S M Ahsan is no longer the Governor of East Pakistan The President has placed East Pakistan under Lt. General Sahabzada Mohammed Yakub Khan who is appointed as the Province s Martial Law Administrator [189]

While explaining the reasons that led to this decision the President said that a major party of West Pakistan the People s Party as well as certain other political parties have declared their intention not to attend the National Assembly session on March 3 1971

In addition he said 'the general situation of tension created by India has further complicated the whole situation I have therefore decided to postpone the summoning of the National Assembly to a later date [190]

Everyone was stunned The Dictator had enacted the old drama West Pakistan was determined to keep East Bengal under slavery India s name was being dragged in to keep the Bengalis under subjugation

The Dictator was still maintaining the posture of a saint He said he wanted to give more time to the political leaders to arrive at a 'reasonable understanding on constitution making' He promised' that he would have no hesitation in convening the National Assembly as soon as the environment became conducive to constitution making He would also do everything in his power to help the political leaders to achieve the goal with even handed justice which he claimed he had all along been doing

Nobody was willing to be deceived by the President s assurances They knew that Bhutto s opposition to the demands of the Awami League reflected the intentions of the Army junta Both were in league with each other Bhutto s attitude was not different on the provisions laid down in the notorious Legal Framework Order Bengal would have to fight for her democratic rights

The people in Dacca Chittagong Sylhet and elsewhere were spontaneously staging demonstrations They were being lathi charged and teargassed The army had already taken up positions in the radio and television buildings [191] Ahsan was dismissed because being a Bengali he could not be trusted by West Pakistan He was practically under house arrest

The Sheikh called for a general strike and asked the people to launch a peaceful non cooperation movement throughout the province While protesting against the postponement of the Assembly session he said If the conspirators still think that they can perpetuate their colonial rule they are living in a fool s paradise [192]

To the demonstrating students who cried for retaliation the Sheikh counseled patience He told them that the Awami League was a democratic party and believed in democratic processes We will launch a peaceful constitutional movement he said He asked the people to be ready for any sacrifices

At the news conference Mujibur Rehman described the postponement of the Assembly session as a dark conspiracy He said he would ask the people of the West Wing provinces of the Punjab Sind the North-West Frontier Province and Baluchistan to rise in protest against this step

He said it was unfortunate that the session was postponed when all the National Assembly members from the East Wing and all West Pakistan members except those belonging to the People s Party and the Muslim League (Qayyum faction) had already reached Dacca to attend it and help in framing a new constitution in preparation for the retoration of civilian rule He regretted that the President had taken the step without consulting his party which enjoyed a majority with a strength of 160 seats in the 300 member Assembly

Noting that the postponement of the Assembly and the earlier decision of the Chief Election Commissioner to defer the election of women members from the West Wing—followed *demands by Bhutto* he *said* the *demand of the* party which is in a minority has been conceded This shows that the democratic procedure has almost failed

Announcing the mass rally planned for Sunday he said If *nothing is forthcoming by then to honour the verdict* of the seventy millions people of East Pakistan I will make a final decision on the future course of action He revealed that the Awami League s Parliamentary Party had already authorised him to take any decision Bhutto had said that there would be a mass agitation in West Pakistan if the National Assembly met without the PPP members participating and the seats reserved for women

for the West Wing were filled while the PPP bycott of the Assembly was on. In a reference to this threat which led to Gen. Yahya Khan's abrupt move Mujibur Rehman said he failed to understand how the PPP could hold out threats when Martial Law was in force 'Do the Martial Law regulations apply only to the people of East Pakistan? he asked[133]

While some foreign commentators said that Yahya Khan had resorted to strong measures on account of Bhutto's pressure an Indian commentator said It is difficult to believe that the President was not strong enough to go against Bhutto The only inference that can be drawn is that they had jointly conspired against the people particularly those of East Pakistan[134] The *Indian Express* wrote editorially that the absurd argument that the tension between India and Pakistan was an additional reason why the session had to be postponed would only confirm the belief in East Pakistan that the destruction of the skyjacked Indian plane and the various military and other measures taken by Islamabad thereafter were all part of a deliberate attempt to create tension with India so as to provide the military regime with an excuse for withholding the transfer of power to the elected representatives of the people[19]

A spokesman of the External Affairs Ministry said We regard the developments inside Pakistan as a purely internal affair of Pakistan We have no desire to interfere or get involved in their domestic affairs We therefore regret this inference to India which we regard as unnecessary and entirely uncalled for Any further comment is unnecessary at this stage[16]

NOTES

1 *The Pakistan Times* March 26 1909
2 *Ibid* March 20 1969
3 *Link* April 6 1969
4 *The Dawn* March 27 1969
5 Ibid (Italics ours)
6 *The Statesman* April 1 1909
7 *The Tribune* May 30 1970
8 *The Hindustan Times* Mar h 9 1970
9 Pyami In ide Pakistan *Current* Bombay June 21 1969
10 *Patriot* May 20 1969
11 H was incharg of thes departm nts in the so called Supr me Martial Law Council
12 *Link* February 15 1970
13 *Ibid* August 24 1969
14 Cf Indian Defence Minister Sardar Swaran Singh s stat ment in th Lok Sabha on April 8 1970 (*The National Herald* April 9 1970)
15 *The Indian Express* November 1 1970
16 *Link* October 18 1970
17 *The Times of India* October 20 1970
18 This was made clear by the Pakistan Embassy in America in a letter to the *New York Times* (Cf *The Indian Express* O t 23 1970)
19 PTI s message published in *The Tribune* October 19 1970
20 Cf Sardar Swaran Singh s statement in the Lok Sabha on March 25 1970 published in *The National Herald* Mar h 26 1970
21 *The Current* Bombay September 16 1969
22 K Subramanyam of Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis President Yahya Khan s visit to Peking published in *The National Herald* December 4 1970
23 *The Indian Express* November 11 1970
24 *Ibid*
25 *The Dawn* Karachi November 15 1970

China s top armaments experts had flown into Pakistan on April 2, 1970 for a first-hand assessment of Pakistan s requirements of military hardware The two Chinese experts were Mr Yuan Hua ping Deputy Director of Equipment Department of the Chinese People s Liberation Army and Mr Chang Shih yi, Deputy Director of the Chinese Ministry of Defence It is to be recalled that in the past the two top brands of the Chinese defence apparatus had

been associated with the discussions on Chinese arms supplies to Pakistan

26 *The Morning News* Dacca November 15 1970
27 *The Dawn* Karachi December 1 1970 Earlier in the last week of May 1970 the Pakistan Air Marshal Abdul Rahim Khan had a friendly talk with Wu F hi n Commander of the Air Force of the Chinese People's Liberation Army The latter said that in recent years the friendship between China and Pakistan had been constantly consolidated and developed and friendly relations and cooperation between our two armies had also been developed accordingly The Chinese people and the Chinese Liberation Army he added firmly supported the Pakistani people (M V Kamath's despatch from Washington published in *The Times of India* on January 17 1970)
28 An AP message published in *The Indian Express* November 11 19(?)
29 *The Dawn* November 11 1970
30 The Daily *Mashriq* Karachi November 9 1970
31 The Daily *Jung* November 9 1970
32 *The Pakistan Times* November 1? 1970 *The Dawn* January 2 1971
33 *The Indian Express* October 17 1970
34 Krishan Bhatia's despatch from Washington published in *The Hindustan Times* March 9 1970
35 Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad's statement published in *The Hindustan Times* June 4 1963
36 PTI's message published in *Patriot* June 16 1970
37 Quoted by the UNI on June 16 1970
38 *Patriot* June 26 1970
39 *The Pakistan Times* June 1 1970
According to reports appearing in the Pakistan Press the Pakistan President is stated to have told newsmen there that he had equal doubts about the allegations that some Pakistan political parties were securing foreign funds
The Pakistan President added that some countries inimical to Pakistan like your next door neighbour India are bound to help certain forces here to harm Pakistan as India would never wish Pakistan well and could not see Pakistan flourishing
40 *The Indian Express* June 13 1970 The Government of India lodged a strong protest against these allegations
41 *Patriot* July 28 1970
42 Quoted in *The Times of India* May 27 1970
43 *Patriot* October 3 1969
44 *Ibid*

45 *The Hindustan Times*, December 3 1970
46 *The Myth of Independence* (Oxford, London 1969) page 163
46a *Ibid* page 177
46b *Political Conspiracies in Pakistan* op cit, p 337
46c *The Pakistan Times*, July 24 1969
46d *The Times of India* July 24 1969
47a *Link* August 31 1969
47 After the formation of ministerial Council by General Yahya Khan in August 1970 Yahya Khan announced the appointment of an Election Commissioner He however made it clear that there was little chance of elections being held in the near future His explanation was that unless the politicians arrived at a consensus among themselves about the constitution they wanted it would be impossible to hold elections The announcement came as a damper to the enthusiasm of those who had thought that the elections were round the corner He said that there were three important points which were stumbling blocks in framing a consensus They were The future of One Unit in West Pakistan the basis of representation of East and West Pakistan in the National Assembly, and the degree of autonomy to be allowed to the federating units of Pakistan
48 UNI s despatch published in *Patriot* August 10 1969
49 *The Pakistan Times*, July 24 1969
50 AFP s despatch published in *The Statesman*, August 18 1969
51 Reuter s despatch published in *The National Herald* August 24, 1969
52 *The Times of India* December 12 1969 *The Tribune* November 14 1969
53 *Patriot* November 11 1969 *The Times of India*, September 20, 1969 *The Indian Express* February 16 1970
54 *The Indian Express* August 24 1969
55 *Link* November 1969 Earlier still, there were instances of clashes between the two groups in 1958 1959 1967 and as early as 1961 The total loss of life in such clashes was estimated by a columnist of *Nawai Waqt* to be 150 It may be pointed out that about a lakh of Bihari refugees lived in the Syedpur area near Dacca
56 *The National Herald*, November 30 1969
57 Quoted in *Link* November 3 1969
58 The strike did take place It was a successful strike
59 *The Pakistan Observer*, September 18 1969
60 *Link* October 26 1969
61 *The Statesman* November 13, 1969
62a. *Ibid*

62 Diwan Birindranath Growing Naxalite Menace in East Pakistan published in *The Tribune* April 5 1970
63 *Link* October 26 1969
64 *Ibid* November 2 1969
65 *The Pakistan Times* November 30 1969
66 *The Times of India* December 1 1969
67 *The Indian Express* December 1 1969
68 *The Patriot* December 24 1969
69 *The Pakistan Times* January 30 1970
70 UPI s despatch published in the *Indian Express* January 21 1970
71 *Ibid*
72 AP s despatch published in the *Indian Express* January 21 1970 *The Pakistan Observer* January 19 1970
73 *The Pakistan Times* March 31 1970
74 Quoted in the *Link* April 12 1970
75 S G M Rukundin, *Election Hand Book* (Karachi 1970) pp 118-30
76 *The Indian Express* April 1 1970
77 *The Statesman* April 25, 1970
78 *Ibid*
79 *Ibid*
80 *The Tribune* April 5, 1970
81 *The Indian Express* April 1 1970
82 A rol on socialism, published in *The Hindustan Times* April 7 1970
83 Diwan Berindranath, ' Window on Pakistan *The Tribune* June 17 1970
84 *Ibid*
85 Cf Bengal Maoists Blast Blitz , published in the *Blitz* May 2 1971
86 Dalip Mukerjee 'Politics in Pakistan published in *The Times of India* March 3 1970
86a *The Times of India* August 12 1970
87 *The Indian Express* June 13 1970
88 *Link* October 25 1970
89 *The Pakistan Times* November 29 1970
90 *The Nai Roshni* Karachi November 6 1970
91 *The Daily Imroz* Lahore November 1 1970
92 UPI s despatch published in *The Times of India*, March 23 1970
93 *The Pakistan Times* November 14 1970
94 *The Dawn* November 8 1970
95 *The Indian Express* April 4 1970
96 *The Morning News* November 15 16 1970

97 Quoted by the *Dawn* November 20 1970
98 *The Pakistan Observer* November 20 1970
99 *Ibid*, November 19 1970
100 *Ibid* November 20 1970
101 *The Pakistan Times* November 19 1970
102 *The Morning News* November 23 1970
103 *The Pakistan Observer* November 18 1970
104 *The Pakistan Times* November 21 1970
105 *The Morning News* November 23 1970 AFP s de patch published in *The Times of India* March 24 1970
106 *Hurriyat* Karachi November 21 1970 *Nawai Waqt* Lahore Nov 23 1970 *Nidai Millat* Lahore November 23 1970 *Anjam* Karachi November 21 1970
107 *The Pakistan Times* November 13 1970
108 *The Pakistan Observer* November 27 1970
109 *The Pakistan Observer* November 12 1970
110a *Th Holiday* Dacca November 8 1970
110 *The Morning News* November 13 1970
111 *Ibid* Nov mber 14 1970
112 *Ibid* November 13 1970
113 *The Pakistan Observer* November 7 1970
114 *The Dawn* November 5 1970
115 *The Morning News* November 1 1970
116 *Link* June 24 1969
117 *Ibid* September 22 1970
118 *Ibid*
119 *The Tribune* August 23 1970
120 121 122 Diwan Birendranath *Too Many Army Generals in Political Arena* in *The Tribune* July 1 1970
123 UNI s despatch publish d in *Patriot* October 30 1970 Bhutto did not meet Ayub Khan on December 4 1969 (cf *Patriot* December 5 1969) Iskander Mirza died of a h art attack on November 13 1970 in London The National Awami League leader Khan Abdul Wali Khan yesterday denied a report in Mr Bhutto s party newpaper that he Sheikh Mujibur Rehman and a Muslim League leader had drawn up a Government plan for Pakistan at a meeting in London in 1969 says PTI

The Khan i sued a statement dismissing as a figment of imagination the report ye terday in *Musawat* a daily publi hed by the Pakistan P ople s Party

Mr Rahman was to be the Prime Minister and the former air chief Air Marshal A ghar Khan the President under the London Plan Khan Wali Khan was to be the Foreign Minister while Mian

187 *The Pakistan Observer* February 24, 25 1971
188 *The Dawn* March 1 1971
189-190 *The Pakistan Times* March 2 1971
191 *The Dawn* March 2 1971
192 UPI's despatch published in the *Indian Express* March 3 1971
193 *The Tribune* March 3 1971
194 What does Yahya Khan want? In *The National Herald* March 3 1971
195 *The Indian Express* March 3 1971
196 *The National Herald* March 2 1971

Chapter X

The Civil Disobedience Movement

The Civil Disobedience Movement launched by the Awami League on March 8 paralysed the Administration on the very first day According to a UPI correspondent complete hartal paralysed all public and private life in Dacca and a walk out from work by postal telegraph telephone and airport employees cut off all communication links joining the provincial capital with the world Only two lines were left working for official use of the military authorities Pakistan International Airlines flights and train services to and from Dacca remained suspended Shop offices and educational institutions also remained closed Dacca University was itself the scene of large scale demonstrations More than ten thousand students gathered on the campus of the University They condemned the postponement of the Assembly session and demanded full autonomy for East Bengal The students demonstration was mostly non-violent though some shops were attacked—mostly wine shops and a number of cars were destroyed These incidents happened because the owners of wine shops had refused to close down their business According to B B C at least

one person was killed in clashes between demonstrators and Security Forces who tried to disperse the students According to Radio Australia the Pakistan National flag was burnt in Dacca amidst slogans of Long live Bengal [2]

The attitude of the Army authorities was provocatory Early in the morning the Martial Law Administrator prohibited the holding of public meetings and demonstrations The publication of news views pictures commentaries or features whether directly or indirectly against the integrity of the country was prohibited with a maximum punishment of 10 years rigorous imprisonment This gave the authorities power to suppress publication of anything connected with the Awami League s six point programme as Bhutto had said it would endanger Pakistan s unity Naturally this was a challenge to the people of East Bengal whom the authorities wanted to punish on account of their demand for autonomy They defied these orders As a measure of retaliation the Martial Law Administrator imposed an 11-hour curfew in Dacca The Army started petrolling the streets Informed sources revealed that troops in battle dress were being flown from Karachi to Dacca and Pakistani troops were being concentrated on the borders with Assam West Bengal and Tripura [3]

The imposition of curfew prohibition to publish news regarding current developments and the Army s provocatory attitude led to new trouble It was known that Army reinforcement was being rushed to East Bengal Thousands of people defied these orders A UPI correspondent reported that he was pinned down inside the Dacca Telegraph Office with police shooting at demonstrators on nearby Jinnah Avenue He could hear the demonstrators shouting Joi Bangla ' (Long live Bengal) He said that Dacca University students who were in the forefront of the 1969 movement which had brought down the former President Ayub Khan were marching in the streets The Army took over the Dacca airport I am terribly disturbed by the cracking of guns while I write this copy School boys burnt effigies of

Bhutto On several streets they piled heaps of dirt and marked them with chalk Bhutto s grave They then offered prayers for the forgiveness of his sins The East Pakistan Eastern News Agency (E.N A) described Dacca as a 'battle ground' The police were firing at the people everywhere In revenge the demonstrators set fire to a number of buildings[4] It was an unprecedented upsurge of Bengali nationalism Yahya Khan conferred with Bhutto Bhutto was being condemned by all other parties He said he was prepared to have another dialogue with Mujib He did not demand a strong centre but only a federal Centre that would have the character of keeping the country a united federal State. He said his party wanted loose federation with a bicameral legislature[5]

While the Civil Disobedience Movement was spreading all over the province the military resorted to firing in Dacca Rangpur Rajshahi Sylhet and other places A number of persons were killed or wounded There were pitched battles between the armed forces and unarmed people The President called for a conference in Dacca on March 10 of the elected leaders of all parliamentary groups He said he would do everything in his power to help the leaders in achieving the common goal Bhutto and Abdul Qayyum welcomed this announcement[6] but Mujib turned down the President s invitation In rejecting the invitation, he said We do not want to sit with the perpetrators of mass murder Talking to newsmen he asked how he could attend the conference when dead bodies were still lying scattered about and gun shots were still reverberating in the peoples ears In the circumstances the call for a conference was nothing short of a cruel joke He himself set the tone for the people s defence by asking the troops to return to the barracks or the Awami League volunteer would resist [7] He announced that the civil disobedience movement would continue until the administration was handed over to the people s elected representatives He gave notice that a no tax campaign would follow if the Government did not res-

poned till March 14 *to the demand that fundamental democratic* rights be secured 'The Martial Law Administration he said ' has no right to continue in this manner By obstructing the constitutional method the authorities had virtually compelled the people to shed their innocent blood to realise their legal rights I appeal to the authorities to stop this wrong immediately[8] Radio Pakistan confirmed that the Sheikh appealed to the people to continue their movement in a peaceful manner because he believed *in democratic principles* He said those who were indulging in looting arson and violence were harming the interests of the popular movement He added We must protect the lives and properties of everyone living in East Pakistan no matter where from he originates or what language he speaks He called upon his party workers to be alert against those who were trying to sabotage the cause of the people by resorting to looting and arson and also to prevent such acts of violence His party and the people he said had adopted a policy of non violence and non cooperation against the postponement of the Assembly session[9]

The popular movement spread to all parts of the province The Army in spite of resorting to inhuman killings failed to crush the people s spirit The daily *Ittefaq* of Dacca revealed that nearly 700 persons were killed and several hundred injured in two days in street fight between troops and angry Bengalis protesting against the postponement of the National Assembly session and continuance of martial law Nurul Amin the solitary P D P member from East Bengal supported the Awami League Chief The Jamaat Islami leader Maulana A G Ahmed the Convention Muslim League Chief Mumtaz Daultana and the Jamiat ul ulema (Hazarvi Group) also rejected the President s invitation Dacca was undergoing a *blood bath* The city was burning The U S Consulate in Dacca reported that smoke could be seen from fires blazing in the city Reports reaching Washington on March 14 spoke of clashes between Dacca police and the Pakistan Army forces One such report that

a Dacca hospital was filled with injured police after a clash with army security forces [10] B B C quoted Mujib as saying that 300 persons were killed in and around Dacca alone in the reign of terror that was let loose in the wake of the protest demonstrations'

A U P I corre pondent in Chittagong said 108 persons were killed and several others injured on March 3 and 4 in clashes between security forces and the people He also quoted reports from Khulna as saying that six persons were killed as a result of firing One man was lynched after throwing a bomb into a funeral procession In Jessore an old woman was killed as a result of firing while the army killed nine per ons in Jessore and eight in Tongi These reports revealed that the army build-up was continuing in East Bengal with all airports and government buildings heavily guarded Radio Australia said the treets of Dacca were full of rubble and other debris The people had set up road blocks every 200 meters to hamper the movement of soldiers [1]

In a despatch from Dacca the Associated Press quoted Mujib as saying that he was willing to share power with Bhutto in an effort to keep Pakistan together I surrender Mujib said If that is what Bhutto wants I will agree to have two Prime Ministers This was apparen ly a reference to a formula attributed to Bhutto under which the two wings of Pakistan would have separate Prime Ministers with a common President providing the unifying link [3]

Amidst the stench of death left by three days of violence the Martial Law Administrator announced that the troops called out in Dacca would return to barracks on March 6 Within twenty four hours of this announcement the President in a radio broadcast to the nation announced that the National Assembly would start its session on March 25 However he did not criticise Bhutto s threats against the Awami leader The President devoted a good deal of his 13-minute speech to criticising Mujib s attitude He said that from the time elections were completed every step that I

took in the process of transfer of power had been one way or the other obstructed by some of our leaders He claimed that he was not responsible for what had happened He said his decision to postpone the session was taken to preserve the Assembly—an obvious reference to his power to dissolve the House if it failed to produce a Constitution acceptable to him—and to promote a dialogue between the leaders of the two wings He admitted that at least 123 persons were killed or injured but he was not to be blamed for that because he claimed that he had directed the armed forces to use the absolute minimum force essential to curb the widespread lawlessness [14] He still believed in ruthless violent measures to curb the people s aspirations This is why he warned that the armed forces of which I am the Head will ensure that Pakistan s complete and absolute integrity shall be maintained [15]

Political commentators said the President s announcement was more a provocation to East Bengal than an attempt at reconciliation It was further said that the President by making references to his functions as Head of the armed forces made no bones about his future course of action and did not hesitate even in the face of total revolt in East Bengal to put the onus for the present situation on the East Bengal leader Sheikh Mujibur Rehman [16]

The Statesman noted that Yahya Khan s tone was not conciliatory The paper forwarned about the danger ahead in the e words

> Another aspect of President Yahya Khan s broadcast which has not escaped notice here (in New Delhi) is the interval of 19 days before calling the Assembly s session. One as umption being made is that the Army needs this time to reinforce (West) Pakis ani troops in th eas ern wing [17]

This apprehension was subs an ia ed by th fact that even as Gen Yahya Khan w n on the air on March 6 troops were being flown into troubled East Bengal the army had not been withdrawn in Dacca and the soldiers were

still busy killing the demon traitors Awami League sources revealed that the Government was reinforcing troops by plane and ship They were sailing to Chittagong The sources said they believed the army was building up for a showdown with Mujib [18] On the same day the police killed about 100 prisoners in the Central Jail of Dacca Reports of thousands of casualties came in from different parts of East Bengal Awami League General Secretary Tajuddin Ahmed charged the troops with killing unarmed civilians He appealed to the people of West Pakistan to join right-thinking people everywhere to urge that such naked use of force against an unarmed civilian population should be brought to an end [19]

The appointment of Gen Tikka Khan as the new Governor was another shock and warning to the people of East Bengal Political observers recalled that Gen. Tikka Khan was a very tough officer He had led Pakistan s aggression against India in the Rann of Kutch early in 1965 and had reportedly boasted that he could drive the Indian forces upto Bombay Yahya Khan s preference for a West Pakistani strong man for the new job had a significant purpose Only a West Pakistani and also a tough military officer could be trusted with this post

On the expiry of the period of his notice on March 7 Sheikh Mujibur Rehman while addressing a mammoth gathering of about 1 50 000 persons asked East Bengal Government officials to obey him. He called for a partial general strike and threatened a boycott of the National As embly unless martial law was lifted and troops returned to their barracks an inquiry was ordered into the mass killings during the past week and power was transferred to the people He said no revenue be paid to the Government and all offices courts and schools be closed If a bullet is fired he warned build a fortress in every house He regretted that the President had sought to pin the responsibility for the crisis on him He charged the President with listening to a minority and ignoring the majority view point

He recalled that as a leader of the majority party he had suggested to the President to call the National Assembly on February 15 This advice was not heeded Instead the Assembly was convened for March 1 on the advice of a minority leader (Bhutto) He had declared that any reasonable suggestion made by any member would receive his earnest consideration Inspite this the President had accused him of not co-operating in the framing of the Constitution. He reiterated his desire to secure the co operation of other parties and said We can live like brothers and solve our problems peacefully and amicably

He accused the President of dishonouring the verdict of the majority in not consulting him before he announced the postponement of the March 3 session and again before he fixed March 25 for the convening of the Assembly [20]

On the same day Maulana Bhashani said his party was wedded to the establishment of a Socialist Krishak Sramik Raj [21] It may be recalled that earlier in the second week of December 1970 he had stated that he stood for an Independent Bengal [22] Again in the third week of February 1971 he had declared at a meeting held at Chittagong that he would launch a jail breaking movement to release all political prisoners [23] According to reports reaching Shillong the army killed a number of persons in Sylhet the home town of the Maulana At Jakiganj processions were being taken out every day The demonstrators shouted slogans like Save Bengalis from West Pakistanis exploitation and Joi Bangla [24] The Martial Law authorities in a press note issued in Dacca admitted that 132 persons including one officer were killed in the week long disturbances

Sheikh Mujibur Rehman s writ rather than President Yahya Khan s, seemed to run on March 8 as a non violent civil disobedience movement got under way to force the military rulers to lift martial law and restore democracy While Radio Pakistan in the national bulletin blacked out news from the east wing Dacca Radio played a recorded

version of the Awami League leader's historic speech of March 7 which described the east wing's struggle as a fight for emancipation His non cooperation propaganda broadcast by Dacca Radio which now described itself as Dacca Betar Kendra (Dacca wireless station) instead of Dacca Station of Radio Pakistan envisaged the formation of sangram samities (war committees) in all towns and villages

This meant that the Dacca Radio had started defying the rigorous censorship imposed by the martial law authorities The Press in East Bengal similarly ignored the orders of the military authorities The radio and the Press started using the word Bangla Desh instead of East Pakistan The Dacca Betar Kendra said that while asking the people to remain non violent the Sheikh had cautioned them against playing into the hands of anti social elements He stressed that it was their moral duty to protest the interests of all Bengalis—Hindus and Muslims He also warned the people against extremists

The programme for the civil disobedience envisaged the following [6]

Black flags would fly atop buildings Sangram samitis will be organised in all towns and villages Government and semi Government offices and courts will remain closed Rail services and dock operations will continue normally However equipment for troops will not be carried If the army resorted to force the employees will refuse to work Telephone departments will handle trunk calls Banks will function but will not handle transactions involving transfer of funds from the east wing to the west wing Educational institutions will remain closed

Revenue payments will not be made

Radio television and newspapers will see that the statements of the Awami League leaders are reported If there is any black-out of news of the movement, the employees will refuse to work

There will be no hartal for the time being but call for partial or full hartals may be given any time

The Dacca Betar Kendra however continued broadcasting *the announcements of the military authorities* The staff of the radio station was in fact following the instructions of the Sheikh that there should be no restrictions on freedom of expression A UNI despatch from Chittagong reported

Patriotic songs in Bengali pertaining to the pre independence days were broadcast over Dacca Radio and its three sub-stations in East Pakistan for about half an hour before closing time last night The theme songs of pre partition days in praise of Bangla Desh were broadcast simultaneously over Rajshahi Sylhet and Chittagong stations This is the first time in the wake of disturbances in the east wing of Pakistan that such songs were broadcast by the radio [7]

That the Sheikh never intended to break the unity of Pakistan is proved by the fact that while he stood for the majority right to rule he was prepared to seek the co operation of the leaders of West Pakistan in an attempt to frame a constitution for the whole country However the President s attitude towards East Bengal s demands as reflected in his insistence on adherence to his so called Legal Framework Order and the Army s wanton killing of innocent people had forced the Sheikh to launch the peaceful struggle As an observer put it the Awami League s stand as outlined by Mujib in his speech left it in no doubt that it considered Gen Yahya Khan s latest statement a virtual threat to veto a constitution based on its six point programme [8]

Und r the caption Rehman s Round the Tribune in an editorial on March 10 said By preferring moderation as the weapon rather than extremism the Sheikh has sent the ball rolling into the President s court The success of the non violent civil disobedience movement he has since launched indicates that now his writ and not the Martial Law *Administrator s runs in East Pakistan. Unwilling to*

be found wanting most civilian officials have begun to accord recognition to the status and wishes of the Sheikh as leader of the majority party described until recently as the prospective Prime Minister of Pakistan. Dacca Radio too has promptly fallen in line calling itself 'Dacca Betar Kendra (Dacca News Centre) not an appendage of Radio Pakistan as hitherto Refusing to run the station when ordered by the Martial Law authorities to stop a relay of Sheikh Mujibur Rehman s rally speech the staff has left no one in doubt where their loyalties lie Songs have already been on the air in praise of Bangla Desh Even Government House *cooks and bearers have crossed over Awami League* sources state that the Sheikh has entrusted specific administrative responsibilities to senior members of his staff These reports confirm that the majority party is well set for establishing a defacto Government in ca e President Yahya Khan is tactless enough to persist with his military regime even though the stage is set for ending it

The widespread defiance of Islamabad was capped by the refusal of all Bengali judges including the Chief Justice to swear in Lt. Gen Tikka Khan as Military Governor The employees of the defence establishments refused to submit to the ultimatum of dismissal and prosecution in case of their refusal to attend to their duties In order to avoid further embarrassment the President appointed Lt. Gen D C Khan Martial Law Administrator [9] However nobody was willing to obey his orders Men of the East Pakistan Rifles (E P R) the Bengal Rifles and Ansars refused to shoot their kinsmen at the behest of their west wing army commanders The mutinous conditions in East Bengal thus created a crack in President Yahya Khan s military regime dominated by west wing army officers [10] Telephone tele graph and postal links between East and West Pakistan were cut off following refusal of the Bengali staff to handle or transmit any message to and from the western wing

In the meantime Maulana Bhashani announced that his followers would support the struggle launched by Mujibur

Rehman.[31] The Maulana called on the Bengalis to organise a 'people's force' to protect the country from external danger. According to the English language newspaper *The People* the Maulana told a peasants rally at Mymensingh that he had pledged his full support to the Sheikh.[32] According to the APP he reiterated his call for a jail breaking movement to free all political prisoners. He particularly mentioned the veteran revolutionary leader Moni Singh who has been languishing in jail for the last 13 years.[33] According to reports received in Agartala on March 15 the pro Peking communist groups headed by the co-ordination committee of East Bengal launched a movement for the establishment of an independent Republic of Bangla Desh. According to these reports they claimed to have already liberated some of the rural areas in districts like Khulana, Barisal and Sylhet where the writ of the former administration did not run. It was further said that the pro communists in these areas had raised a 5000 strong volunteer corps armed with seized guns, spears, lathis, bows and arrows. Non Bengalis in Sylhet and elsewhere were leaving for Dacca in a bid to fly out.[34]

It is interesting to note that the pro Peking elements in West Bengal dubbed Mujib as a stooge of imperialism. In an editorial in the March issue of their clandestinely published *Deshabrati* their party said that the U.S., the U.K., West German and Russian imperialists were making an idol of Mujib to make him look like the saviour of a United Bengal.[3]

It seems that the Maulana had now realised his mistake of relaying on Chinese promises. He and his followers had changed their outl[illegible] However although they had to support the Sh[illegible] caption did not believe in any non violent movement. March 10

Air Marsh[illegible]ther than e[illegible]an flew to Dacca. He met the Sheikh in the se[illegible]to the Pr[illegible]of March. In a statement issued to the Press on [illegible]vil disobe[illegible]n his arrival back in Karachi he [illegible] he ruler[illegible] that [illegible]ver was not transferred within

five or six days to the Awami League the province would declare independence He said

Sheikh Mujibur Rehman is under pressure to declare independence but so far he has been able to control his more extremist supporters and has acted with great moderation We must realise that East Pakistan is already mentally separated from West Pakistan with Mujib in the role of a *de facto* ruler giving orders to senior civil servants and other officials [36]

On March 10 Mr M Khurshid President of the West Punjab unit of the Awami League met the President On the next day Bhutto sent a telegram to Mujib offering to meet him in Dacca immediately to devise a common solution to end the crisis so that the National Assembly can proceed with the framing of the Constitution [37] As he had not spelt out any formula the Sheikh ignored him Describing the situation in East Bengal the Sheikh said on the same day that all branches of the administration were complying with the wishes of the Awami League on its non violent non-co-operation programme He complained that military strength in East Bengal was being increased [38]

A meeting of the minority parties in West Pakistan called by Jamiat ul Ulema General Secretary Maulana Mufti Mahmud called upon Gen Yahya Khan to concede the four demands made by Mr Rehman as pre conditions for attending the National Assembly session on March 25 The meeting also urged the president that the Sheikh should be called upon to form an interim Government [39]

Air Marshal Noor Khan observed that it was the legal right of Sheikh Mujibur Rehman to rule the country and that all impediments in the way of transfer of power must immediately be removed [40] More than twenty prominent leaders of West Pakistan as well as a number of prominent lawyers of Rawalpindi and Lahore urged the President to accept the demands of the Awami League [41]

Chapter XI

Pak Aggression Against Bangla Desh

On March 15 Sheikh Mujibur Rehman announced that he was taking over the administration of Bangla Desh He issued thirty five directives covering most activities of civilian life and for a smooth functioning of the people s movement against the Martial Law Administration He asked the people not to pay any central tax He asked them to continue their strike of the Federal Government Secretariat and provincial and semi Government offices and the courts and port authorities to function in all respects relating to incoming and outgoing ship except that no co operation shall be extended for mobilisation of forces or materials which may be ultilised for repression against the people [1] Within a few hours of this announcement President Yahya Khan flew into Dacca Sheikh Mujibur Rehman met him amidst reports that the President was willing to form a civilian Government The new Martial Law Administrator Gen Tikka Khan announced the formation of an inquiry committee to go into the allegation of Military atrocities However the Sheikh was not satisfied over its personnel and terms of reference He appointed his own Committee In the meanwhile Bhutto made conflicting statements On March 15 he said if power was to be transferred to the

representatives of the people before any constitutional settlement, as demanded by Sheikh Mujibur Rehman it should be given to the Awami League in East Bengal and his People s Party in the western wing" Within twenty-four hours he changed his mind and demanded prior understanding among the two major parties Three days later he threatened to launch an agitation throughout West Pakistan.[3] He said that his party would not join any coalition Government with the Awami League or any other party if the majority of the West Pakistanis opposed it He announced that he would not even take part in parleys that were going on in Dacca He said that a grave situation would arise if the present situation continued and if the people of West Pakistan were robbed of their rights[4]

Bhutto s attitude was condemned by the workers of the N A P in Karachi They charged him with conspiring to sabotage the negotiations Mufti Mohmud General Secretary of the Jammiat e Ulema e Islam referring to Bhutto s demand for the transfer of power to the majority parties *in the two wings said that it was incomprehensive how* power could be transferred to two majority parties He urged the President to call upon Sheikh Mujibur Rehman to form a Government Malik Ghulam Jilani convener of the Punjab Pakistan Front Syed Siddique Hassan Gilani Chief of the Jammat Islami and Mian Mumtaz Daultana Chief of the Convention Muslim League blamed Bhutto for this crisis They said that Bhutto was trying to hoodwink the people on one pretext or another in order to sabotage the negotiations[5] Air Marshal Noor Khan blamed certain advisers of the President and certain bureaucrats that they had asked certain political parties (headed by Bhutto and Qayyum) to abotage the Assembly session. A Karachi paper said that these bureaucrats were in constant touch with Bhutto They found Bhutto a convenient tool to serve them The paper advised the President to *end the conspiracy*[6]

In the meantime while President Yahya Khan and Sheikh Mujibur Rehman were busy in negotiations the army was firing on crowds in Dacca Chittagong Rangpur and other places. The people refused to supply rations to the Army The workers refused to unload equipment from ships. Railwaymen refused to run trains for military movements. The atmosphere was thick with rumours that the Sheikh would be arrested While going to meet the President the Sheikh told his people to obey the directives of his companions if you do not find me in your midst" during the movement for the realisation of the people s rights.[7]

A UPI *despatch from Dacca on March 20 said that President Yahya Khan and Sheikh Mujibur Rehman* had agreed in their talks that East Bengal would be a sovereign independent Bengal under a confederation as envisaged in the Muslim League s 1940 resolution[8]

On the same day Bhutto announced that he was flying to Dacca A UPI report from Karachi said that Bhutto was air dashing to Dacca as he feared that his party might be left out of a possible interim Government Khan Wali *Khan Mufti Mahmud Mumtaz Daultana and other leaders of the minority parties of* West Pakistan were already there in Dacca In the meantime reports of the Army s atrocities were pouring in Dacca According to Dacca Radio the Army killed 300 persons in Jadevpur Troops pursued villagers to their homes in Chogra and Chandra Adighir Chola and women and children were tortured When an ambulance team was sent by Mujibur Rehman to bring back the wounded the army topped them and threatened to shoot them The Sheikh said All I know is that unarmed people have been killed I strongly condemn it The Awami League officials termed this event as a deliberate attempt by the hawks to sabotage the negotiations between Sheikh Mujibur Rehman and Gen Yahya Khan[9]

Reports reaching New Delhi indicated that General Hamid Khan Commander in Chief of Pakistan s armed forces, Gen Tikka Khan and Bhutto had joined together

to overthrow President Yahya Khan in case the later agreed to appoint Sheikh Mujibur Rehman Prime Minister of Pakistan It was further said that Gen Hamid paid a secret visit to Karachi on March 17 and had secret talks with some senior officers [10] It is difficult to verify the authenticity of this news However the army was getting reinforcements through air transport planes and ships Naturally the question arises that if the President was really keen to concede autonomy to East Bengal what was the need to rush troops to that provice and allow them to shoot down the demonstrators ?

At about 10 p m on March 22 Bhutto announced at a news conference that a general compromise had been reached upon between President Yahya Khan and Sheikh Mujibur Rehman and we are examining the formula [11] At the same time the President announced the postponement of the inaugural session of the National Assembly originally fixed for March 25 to a later date He said this had been done to enlarge the area of agreement and facilitate a settlement between the leaders of the east and west wings on constitutional matters [1]

This meant that the President had agreed to some formula The question arises as to who was the author of this formula and what was the substance of this formula. It may be recalled that earlier on March 14 Bhutto had said that if power was to be transferred to the representatives of the people before any constitutional settlement, as demanded by the Sheikh it should be given to the Awami League in East Bengal and his People s Party in the western wing. This statement was published in all West Pakistan news-papers including *The Dawn* on March 15 The new formula to which the President agreed in principle envisaged with-drawal of Martial Law formation of provincial governments and the division of the Constituent Assembly into two committees one composed of members of East Bengal and the other composed of members from West Pakistan. The President said that Bhutto and other West Pakistan leaders had [illegible]

him that the proposed proclamation by him would have no legal sanction whatsoever He claimed that these leaders had told him that the National Assembly should meet to draft an interim constitution Bill and present it to him for his assent The President agreed to this view[13] However he pointed out that the West Pakistani leaders were opposed to the proposed division of the National Assembly On the other hand the Awami League leaders claimed that the said formula was proposed by Gen Yahya Khan to accommodate Bhutto The former is said to have cited the practical advantage of that whilst the six-points provided a viable blueprint to regulate relations between Bangla Desh and the centre its application would raise serious difficulties in the west wing For this reason he said the west wing must be permitted to get together to work out a new pattern of relationship in the context of a six point constitution and the dissolution of the one unit It is further said that the President called his Economic Adviser M M Ahmed who suggested some amendments in the formula and the Awami League in the sitting of March 24 accepted the amendment with certain minor changes[14] The Awami League refuted the President s allegation that the Sheikh was not agreeable to holding a meeting of the National Assembly to legalise the transfer of power[15] The postponement of the inaugural session of the National Assembly was probably a cover to complete military preparations for a final assault The Sheikh resented it especially in view of the fact that the military was indulging in killing innocent people On March 23 Dacca Betar Kendra announced that the struggle would continue despite inhuman atrocities The announcement emphasised that the position prevailing in Pakistan on March 1 had undergone a radical and revolutionary transformation It pointed out

'The transformation has affected all aspects of the Government s organic structure and sovereignty There is no longer a master wing and a slave wing There is no longer an affluent wing and a destitute wing The

policy of Pakistan has also undergone a change. *The basis of Pakistan was bilateral sovereignty of the two units The two units should accommodate each other as sovereign units* The only alternative is complete separation of Pakistan into West Pakistan and Bangla Desh Mujibur Rehman has been functioning as the only legitimate and lawful authority since the civil disobedience movement began Life is functioning normally and the writ of the Government of Islamabad controlled by bureaucrats and militarists of West Pakitan has ceased to operate in Bangla Desh except in military cantonment. The name of East Pakistan has been discarded A new name of the country Bangla Desh has been adopted The flag of Pakistan has been discarded The Govern ment in Islamabad has been disowned and has ceased to operate A new flag has been adopted by the people [16]

While the Pakistani rulers were celebrating the National Day and in Dacca as in Islamabad guns boomed 31 times in recognition of Yahya Khan s presence the focus was on Sheikh Mujibur Rehman who had declared the day as a holiday From different parts of the city people flowed to the Sheikh s residence in processions making a vast confluence of humanity This was Resistance Day Addressing the multitude the Sheikh called for continuance of the struggle into peaceful and determined manner until the 75 million people of Bangla Desh were liberated and were able to live as free citizens of a free country Even if only one out of the 75 million is left the struggle shall continue and there can be no compromise on the rights of the people he declared echoing sentiments that had been expressed repeatedly during the past 22 tension packed days.

The Awami League chose that day to bring into the open the newly formed volunteer organisation called Bangla Desh Corp Men of the corps held a parade at the historic Paltan Maidan where Mr Rehman had launched the civil

disobedience movement and then marched to Mr Rehman's residence where he took the salute

As the youthful volunteers chanted Joi Bangla Mr. Rehman unfurled the flag of Bangla Desh In the speech Mr Rehman hailed the day not for its association with the first constitution abrogated when power passed into the hands of the army but for its association with the pre-partition All India Muslim League s resolution calling for an autonomous and sovereign Muslim majority State on the sub continent

Mr Rehman recalled that the Muslim League meeting in Lahore from March 22 to 24 1940 had envisaged a State of Pakistan the con tituent units of which shall be autonomous and sovereign he said We have made sacrifices we have shed blood I can assure you the blood we have shed ha not been in vain

In a veiled reference to the dramatic developments that followed the launching of the civil disobedience movement he said In the last 22 days of the struggle the enemies of the people have been forced to admit the strength of the people s movement

Thou ands of citizens visited the Shahid Minar and laid wreaths in homage to the martyers of the earlier movements for recognition of the linguistic and cultural heritage of the people of the east wing

The Awami League call for observance of the day as Resistance Day evoked a response from varied groups Students and workers organised rallies and processions The National Awami Party of Maulana Abdul Hamid Bhashani held a largely attended meeting A torchlight procession was taken out at night[7]

The talks were still going on The Pre ident still kept up the facade of discussion of his formula with differen leaders In the meantime the Army had killed 110 persons within two days Forty per ons died at Rangpur fifty at Saidpur and 20 in Chittagong In Chi tagong thousands of people tried to prevent the army from unloading armaments

from a ship Dockers had refused to unload the ship and the Awami circles said that the army's decision to do so indicated that it was preparing for a showdown. It was further disclosed that the Chinese planes carrying armements were arriving in Dacca from Uramene in China[8] According to another report about 60 000 West Pakistani troops had already arrived in three cantonments of Dacca Comilla and Jessore The Sheikh said I am shocked to hear of the shootings. There are reports of heavy firing on unarmed civilians and of atrocities The police are being bypassed and a reign of terror let loose All this has happened when President Yahya Khan has declared his resolve to settle the constitutional problem I urge him to immediately order a cessation of military operations He should know that the killing of unarmed people will not go unchallenged

Despite these barbarities the President still posed as if he was keen to end the political stalemate On March 24 Bhutto told the British and American correspondents that agreement was in sight and the prospects for a settlement had heightened in the last 24 hours.[9] American news agencies reported that the President was expected to announce an agreement on March 25 to lift martial law and turn over power to a civilian Government in East Bengal and four provinces of West Pakistan The Awami League leaders were also confident about it[10] But the Dacca Betar Kendra (Dacca Radio) warned that Bhutto was bent on sabotaging the efforts to resolve the constitutional crisis

On March 25 the President continued negotiations with Sheikh Mujibur Rehman Bhutto Abdul Qayyum and other leaders After emerging from the President's house Bhutto told reporters My party has already admitted that the people of Bangla Desh have been exploited all these years. Abdul Qayyum said I am hoping for the best Maulana Mufti Mahmud said he was satisfied with his talks in Dacca[11] The irony of fate was that even on March 25 when Dacca Radio announced that the President had agreed in princi-

to hand over power to the elected representatives in East Bengal the army had already taken over charge of Rangpur without consulting the Deputy Commissioner A number of people were mercilessly butchered The Sheikh called for a general strike all over Bangla Desh on March 26 as a protest against these killings [22]

While Bhutto and Qayyum knew about what was going to happen others including the Awami leaders were being told that the President was going to make a very important announcement to re e tablish democracy Little did they knew that the savage Huns had already given final touches to their plan of wanton aggression against the people of Bangla Desh

Bhutto Qayyum and others left Dacca by a chartered plane A heavily guarded military van took them to the airport Bhutto murmured We shall teach a lesson to these wretched Bengalis

President Yahya Khan left Dacca for Karachi by the same plane He had promised to make an important announcement He was true to his promise He did make an important announcement Before leaving Dacca he told Gen Tikka Khan to accomplish what he could not achieve in his aggression against India in the Rann of Kutch To him every Bengali was an Indian agent They must be butchered He confirmed this order in his so called mes age to the nation He prohibited political activities throughout the country declared Awami League an unlawful organisa tion and condemned the Sheikh as a traitor As Dacca Radio was not expected to oblige him his order to attack and massacre the people of Bangla Desh was relayed by the Islamabad Radio amidst cries of Long Live Pakistan and Victory to Islam However before the actual relaying of this order the Huns had already butchered thousands of innocent people The historic city of Dacca was ablaze The blood thirsty soldiers of Yahya Khan were enjoying the fun

The Dacca Betar Kendra said West Pakistani rulers have again betrayed us

NOTES

1 *The Hindustan Times* March 16 1971
2 *The Dawn* March 15 1971
3 Reuter s despatch published in *The Times of India* March 16 1971
4 *Ibid* March 20 1971
5 *The Dawn* March 10 13 15 1971
6 *The Jasarat* Karachi March 2 1971
7 *The Statesman* March 17 1971
8 *The Indian Express* March 21 1971
9 AFP despatch published in *The Patriot* March 21 1971
10 *The Patriot* March 21 1971
11 12 *The Times of India* March 23 1971
13 President Yahya Khan s message to the nation relayed by Radio Pakistan on March 26 1971 (cf *The Times of India*, March 27 1971)
14 15 Mr Tajuddin Ahmad s statement on April 17 1971 published in *The Statesman* April 17 1971
16 *The National Herald* March 24 1971
17 UNI despatch published in *The National Herald* March 23 1971
18 AFP despatch published in *The National Herald* March 26 1971
19 AP and UPI messages published in *The Indian Express* March 25 1971
20 *Ibid*
21 *The Statesman* March 26 1971
22 *The National Herald* March 26 1971

Chapter XII

The Birth of Bangla Desh
Pakistan Resorts to Slaughter

'The Sheikh has declared the 75 million people of East Pakistan as citizens of the sovereign independent Bangla Desh

The voice of Independent Bangla Desh that made this announcement said Bangabandhu (Sheikh Mujibur Rehman) has asked the people to resist the enemy forces at any cost in every corner of Bangla Desh May Allah bless you and help you in your struggle for freedom from the enemy Joi Bangla

Sheikh Mujibur Rehman s declaration was flashed over the wirless from an unknown place and picked up in Calcutta on the morning of 26th March General Tikka Khan's army had already destroyed the Dacca Betar Kendra The announcer of this radio station along with his colleagues was either murdered or taken in o cu tody In the meantime the word reached Chittagong where the Bengali officers and men of the East Pakistan Rifles and Police had joined hands with the freedom fighters They captured the Chittagong station of Radio Pakistan turned it into the voice of independent sovereign Bangla Desh and relayed

the Sheikh s declaration of independence The announcer said

> ' Bangla Desh appeals to the United Nations and to the Asian and African countries to render it all assistance in its fight against the colonial rulers of West Pakistan The liberation war has begun It is a part of the Afro Asian countries movement for liberation from colonial domination

The radio referred to the surrounding of a West Pakistani regiment by the East Pakistan Rifles and the Liberation Army somewhere in Bangla Desh and said The whole regiment will be crushed

Mujibur Rehman s voice said Pakistan armed forces suddenly attacked the East Pakistan Rifles base Pielchana and the Rajabog police station in Dacca from zero hours on March 26 killing lots of unarmed people The East Pakistan Rifles in Dacca and the police are fighting the Pakistan armed forces sternly The people are fighting gallantly with the enemy for the cause of the freedom of Bangla Desh Every section of the people of Bangla Desh are asked to resist the enemy forces at any cost [1]

The Pakistan army s unprovoked aggression against the people of Bangla Desh had forced Sheikh Mujibur Rehman to declare independence A few hours before he had been assured by Yahya Khan that he would declare the handing over of the administration to the elected representatives of the people The Sheikh was very hopeful Even the Army s killings on that day had not provoked him He had simply asked the people of Dacca to observe a peaceful strike on the next day when he would himself address a public meeting at Paltan Bazar He had appealed to the President to stop shooting and ask the troops to go back to their barracks However as soon as the President left the capital the Army launched a full scale aggression in Dacca and elsewhere. The blood thirsty hawk General Tikka Khan who was itching for a showdown since the day he was appointed Martial Law Administrator, ordered his

troops to crush the people at any cost Through a series of orders he banned all political activities imposed a strict consorship on the Press radio and television asked all Government employees to return to work or face dismissal and prosecutions closed all educational institutions prohibited keeping of all kinds of weapons banned strikes authorised the army personnel to make a search of any place and to arrest any person without a warrant All foreign correspondents were ordered to quit East Bengal Simultaneously army attachments stormed the different strongholds of the Awami League supporters They employed tanks, machine guns mortars and flame throwers Within a few minutes the whole of the city was engulfed in flames People were being massacred A hurried conference of the Awami League leaders took place at the residence of Sheikh Mujibur Rehman All of them agreed that Yahya Khan had played a treacherous role It was wanton aggression They decided to declare Bangla Desh an independent sovereign State and called upon the people to fight for liberation

The Sheikh asked his colleagues including the militant student leaders to get out of the city and carry on the struggle for independence He himself refused to go into hiding He said If I go out these ruffians (the West Pakistanis) will kill the entire population

It was a night of terror butchery and bloodshed History has never before recorded such a terrible slaughter

It is said that the army started moving into Dacca at 10 p m on March 25 At 11 p m it began an attack on the Rajabagh Armed Police Headquarters Another column attacked the East Pakistan Rifles Headquarters at Pilkhana and a third the University campus The 10 Army employed tanks mounted heavy guns and recoilless rifles to break down entrances and walls Policemen and soldiers were sleeping at that time Little did they know that the West Pakistani army would launch such a surprise attack According to Awami League sources 800 to 1 000 members of a suicide brigade inside the Armed Police Headquarters was wiped

out About 3 000 others managed to get away The East Pakistan Rifles held out for two days managing to inflict heavy casualties [2]

The Police Headquarters were completely destroyed The army attacked all other police stations in the city and policemen staying in these stations were butchered Thereafter the army destroyed the fire brigade stations one by one [3] Pakistani troops atttacked Bengali passengers sleeping on the railway platforms at Dacca station They machine gunned more than 50 persons and a thick layer of human blood covered the platforms [4]

Another strong military column with tanks surrounded the university campus Mr Colin Smith of *The Observer* London reveals that the killing began at the university at about one in the morning The students in bed in the residential halls heard the army vehicles approaching Most of them thought the military were coming to make a few more arrests A few of the militants made sure that the rifles they had collected from the towns people over the past few weeks were well hidden Nobody thought he would have to fight

Suddenly searchlights were played on the windows dazzling the students so that they had to quit and turn away Then came the Punjabi and Baluchi soldiers with their Chinese AK 47 automatic rifles smashing the window glasses with their butts and spraying the dormitories with fire

A few students got to the roof tops where they managed to squeeze off one or two shots with their old holt action rifles before they were picked up in the searchlights and killed Others with their hands up only to be stood against the walls of their halls and mown down with machine gun fire from tanks and armoured cars The survivors were finished off with the bayonet

The lecturers killed in the attack were Dr G C Deb Head of the Department of Philosophy Dr Mofizulla Kabir Head of the History Department Dr A N Manirussaman Head of the Statistics Department Dr M Maniruzzaman Reader in the Bengali Department, and Dr Objnosoroz

Chockrobroti Reader in the English Department and Provost of Jagannath Hall the only Hindu residental hall Five other lecturers whose names I was not able to collect are also believed to be dead Dr Innas Ali Head of the Physics Department is said to have been seriously injured [5]

Another journalist described the scene of killing at the university in these words

'The university was defenceless but it was assaulted by three battalions—one armoured one artillery and one infantry The troops began by taking over the British Council Library (its police guards were shot dead) and installed heavy guns on it to shell the hostels Squads approached individual bungalows occupied by senior professors and lecturers sprayed the buildings with heavy machine gun fire and mowed down those trying to escape women and children included The victims included some of the best brains in East Bengal Heads of Departments were special targets Student casualties ran into hundreds Several girls were abducted from the women's hostel others jumped from the roof to escape the same fate [6]

A British resident who left the city in the first week of April told the UPI that the attack was a citywise massacre by West Pakistani troops They shot all seven of the East Pakistan Rifles guarding the British Council Library First they gunned down the guard on duty then went into the premises and entered the sleeping quarters of the other guards and gunned the other six At the University of Dacca nine students were shot in Iqbal Hall one of the University research buildings and there were three bodies still on the roof of the building—that of a man a boy and a girl Similar attacks took place at Jagannath Hall Ali mullah Hall and the residence halls of the Dacca Medical College Everyone in these places was killed There were no streets and I know of no one who escaped On the night of the 27th, Saturday another attack with heavy weapons was made on the University Science Laboratory Some smaller

buildings were levelled There were only guesses as to the number of people killed We know there was very little resistance if any we heard of no reports of resistance. The soldiers simply moved out into the town and began killing with every weapon they had This was at a time when the Awami League supporters were more or less running away from Dacca and ignoring Martial Law decrees'[7]

A student who survived the carnage at Dacca University said that he jumped out of the dormitory window and hid at the top of a tree for the night In the morning he saw some Pakistani soldiers giving orders to three terrified bearers to dig a huge grave Then they killed these bearers and threw their bodies into that grave I saw many bodies of poor washermen attached to the university There were pools of blood everywhere A number of students who had escaped to the roof were lined up and shot dead He saw the dead bodies of professors including those of Anadwaipayan Jotirmoy Ghuha and Anwaruzzam[8] Mr Alam a law student told the AP that the students were killed in their bed He saw Pakistani troops shooting down women and children like boys playing with toys. It was genocide a massacre It was worse than Hitler—he did not kill his own people Alam said on the way to the airport he saw about 100 decomposed bodies collected together and the birds were eating them[9] Mr Simon Dring of the *Daily Telegraph* says that about 200 university students were shot dead The building and the surrounding houses were set ablaze.[10] According to UPI three hundred students were killed in the Jagannath Hall and 400 to 450 still asleep in the dormitory were machinegunned The next day the bodies of the students were placed on exhibition in the hall s courtyard so that people would fall in line When relations tried to reclaim the bodies the troops invoked a rule against the assembly of more than five persons and opened fire again Parents fell atop their children[11]

Associated Press photographer Michel Laurant who managed to tour the city after the Army bundled out the foreign newsmen tells that even on March 28 he saw burnt

the Moslem belief in prompt burial preferably within 24 hours to free the soul Where are the maloun (cursed ones) rampaging soldiers often asked as they searched for Hindus But the Hindus were by no means the only victism Many soldiers arriving in East Pakistan were reportedly told the absurdity that it was all right to kill Bengali Moslems because they were Hindus in disguise[20]

About 50 girl students residing at Rockey Hall of Dacca University jumped to their death when troops attacked Most of the other girl students were brutally treated and forcibly taken away to the cantonment[21] In the word of Louis Heren the Pakistan Army was waging a war of genocide He saw the bodies of the university students still clutching lathis or bamboo staves in their hands There were bloody footprints on the central staircase and spots of blood trickled down the outside walls of the building Throughout the night of March 25 there was the glare of large fires and tracer bullets Tonny Clifton of *News week* (New York) says that three Americans went to the university area to inquire into the story of massacre They found a staircase in a faculty building splattered with blood shed when five teachers were dragged out and coldly moved down by gunfire It was a reign of terror Some Punjabi soldiers called a kid over and hit him around the head and in the groin and then forced him to his knees The kid was crying and begging and the soldiers just watched him for a minute Finally they just shot him out and walked out[23] American journalist Loren Jenkins who was bundled off from Dacca on the next day says that the Pakistani army attacked without warning Truckloads of troops spread out through Dacca under cover of darkness with orders to use maximum force to stamp out all resistance Houses were machine gunned at random tanks firing on the streets rent whim of their commanders charged through the apparent There It was a blatant exercise in terror and vengeance There can never be any excuse for the sort of firepower we saw and heard being directed against unarmed civilians

can be no excuse for the merciless burning of the shanty houses of some of the world s most impoverished people'

People though unarmed fought heroically Loren Jenkins says I can still recall the sight of men women and children hacking down trees and tearing up construction sites to build barricades to hamper the army movement Bullets fired into darkened homes were answered with cries of Bangla Desh [24]

It is estimated that more than 50 000 persons were killed or burnt alive within three days

It is said that Sheikh Mujibur Rehman visited different parts of the city before the start of this carnage An army detachment surrounded his residence in the Dhanmandi area of the city He was taken into custody at the outset of the aggression He was prepared for this development Eleven members of his bodyguard including a prominent footballer Bachchu was killed Mujib was flown to West Pakistan where he was confined in the military fort in Attock A number of police officers who were suspected to be the supporters of Sheikh Mujibur Rehman were shot dead The Chief Secretary Mr Rafiqul Azam was arrested under Martial Law [2]

Thousands of Bengali civilians living in Ayub Nagar and Narain Ganj near Dacca town were butchered

The people were not prepared for this onslaught They had no arms nor was there any unified command With sticks iron rods and knives they fought heroically Officers and men of the East Pakistan Rifles East Pakistan Regiment and the Police kept on resisting the invaders for two days Though they suffered heavy casualties enough had escaped to form the nucleus of and later directed the resistance The leaders had gone underground They left Dacca and were trying to meet together to organise resistance In Chittagong their supporters including the police and men and officers of the EPR and EBR captured the city and its radio station Although the army was there in the canton ments of Khulna Jessore Kushtia Rangpur and Mymen

singh Noakhali Comilla Barisal and other important centres the Awami League leaders were able to organise volunteers who occupied these cities In some of thes places the Bengali officers of the EPR and EBR took over command of these volunteers Though they were short of arms and ammunition the will to fight against the aggres sors was there For instance about 30 000 citizens armed with lathis and stones surrounded about 300 army men and forced them to retreat to the district schools there About 300 E P R men and Ansars from the district came in with their rifles After a 28 hour battle the inva ders ran out of ammunition The mob then hacked them to death American journalist Don Coggins who visited the liberated city of Kushtia in the second week of April saw thirteen Pakistani officers and soldiers whom the free dom fighters had kept in the central jail He was told that among the West Pakistan dead was Nasim Waqaar a Punjabi Assistant Deputy Commis ioner of Kushtia When an angry mob found his body they dragged it through the streets of the town half a mile The next day he reports the Pakistan army dispatched another infantry company from Jessore to stage a counterattack on Kushtia At Bishakali village half way to Kushtia the new company fell into a booby trap set by Bangla Desh forces Seventy three soldiers were killed on the spot dozen others were chased and slain. Don Coggin saw the green red and gold flags of Bangla Desh fluttering from rooftops trucks and even rickshaws in Kushtia Bengali administrators were running the region under a local leader Dr Ashabul Haq At that time the liberation forces were in control of at least one third of Bangla Desh [14]

Michel Hornsbey of *The Times* (London) went to Cahu danga (district Kushtia) in the second week of April He saw flags of Bangla Desh flying from every building and from the handlebars of motorcycles and vehicles Dr Huq told him "They (the West Pakistan army) are raping our women, tearing our children to pieces and massacring our

students professors and lawyers They want to rule a country of slaves and prostitutes What more does the world want to hear before it will take sides All along the road to Chaudanga Michel Hornsbey saw groups of children raising their fists shouting Joi Banglao' He said In Chaudanga as in other places in the western regions of East Pakistan civil servants, district magistrates professional men and politicians are organising guerilla resistance to the West Pakistan Army units sent in by President Yahya Khan to crush the independence movement They seem to have the full support of both the population and the police force [7]

Lt Sayyed Ataulah Shah (23) of the 27th Baluch Regiment of the Pakistan Army who along with his twelve colleagues was captured and interned in the Kushtia Jail told Press reporters Please write in your papers about my appeal to the Pathans to turn their guns on those who asked us to kill the people of Bangla Desh The Pakistanis can never win because they are not fighting for a cause The Bengalis are [8]

The Pakistan Air Force heavily bombed Kushtia Chaudanga and the surrounding areas The Pakistani Army used tanks and heavy guns to attack these places According to Radio Pakistan Chaudanga was captured on April 17 On the next day the Army occupied Akhaura an important border railway station in this area The invading army destroyed several hundred houses and killed a number of innocent people However Kushtia continued resistance even till the last week of April On April 23 the invading army burnt down 300 houses in the Burrabazar and Marwarpatty areas in Kushtia town A prominent physician of the town Dr Latif was beaten to death in an open street Fifty youths were slain and buried in a ditch at Arjhupi Some 1500 youth comprising students and freedom fighters were mown down in Chaudanga within a week Abdul Karim and a lawyer Mr Wausi were the eminent persons among those who were shot dead at Satikhira [29] Radio

Pakistan in its bulletin on April 20 admitted these atrocities when it said that most of the pockets of miscreants were wiped out[30]

In Chittagong the invading army had started killing even in the first week of March However the men and officers of the EPR and the EBR who succeeded in escaping from their barracks fought heroically Bengali workers refused to work in the port area The civil administration refused to co operate with the military authorities Freedom fighters occupied the local radio station and turned it into a 'Voice of Independent Bangla Desh The army used tanks heavy guns and mortars to attack the freedom fighters The city was heavily bombed Britons who fled the city in the second week of April revealed that they saw thousands of Bangalis including hundreds of children machine gunned to death and if they ran away they were shot down from behind like dogs There was a terrible massacre in the town said an evacuee who arrived at London Airport on April 4 He said The Bengalis were being killed in thousands and the corpses piled high have been left to rot in the street If the soldiers with guns could not find anyone on the streets they threw mortar bombs into the windows of houses[31] Mr J G Eaton a pastor from New York said that some areas in the city were still in the hands of the freedom fighters with the Bangla Desh flags fluttering atop buildings and hut The Awami League supporters controlled the radio for four days after the outbreak of fighting Two Pakistani bombers bombed the radio station Fighting was still continuing outside the city He confirmed that Cox Bazar about 15 kms from Chittagong was still in the hands of the freedom fighter Johan Martinussen a Danish student saw about 400 bodies floating in the Karnafulli river on April 2[3] The Columbia Broadcasting network reported after interviewing American evacuees from Chittagong that the Pakistan Army had carried out mass killings in Chittagong bordering on genocide At one military base an American evacuee saw a long row of Bengali civilians sus

were piled in a grotesque tableau Farooq said the family consisting of three women three children and an old man had taken shelter in the compound which bore the title Khwaja Manzil , when Pakistan troops found them The bodies bore marks of bayonets or of being struck by heavy instruments[37]

An AP correspondent who visited the city in the first week of May 1971 saw the grave of a 50 year old Italian priest gunned down by soldiers on April 4 in his church Other correspondents walking through the town found huge areas of devastation including three city blocks in the market area where two storey brick buildings burnt and shattered recalled World War II damage[38]

Mymensingh remained a liberated city till April 22 when the invading army assisted by heavy aerial bombardment entered the city and started slaughtering the civilians A Reuter correspondent who visited the city on May 8 said Mymensingh is a sad and desolate town today there are few signs of life Hundreds of shattered shops are empty and closed

The liberation forces took Sylhet town and other places in the district in the last week of March The retreating Pakistani forces suffered heavy casualties but resorted to scorched earth tactics before leaving the battle ground After heavily bombing the town and the surrounding areas the Pakistani Army re occupied Sylhet Sunam Ganj Maulvi Bazar Shamshernagar Chattack Sherpur and Haripur in the second week of May Radio Pakistan in its news bulletin on May 14 admitted the killing of saboteurs Heavy fighting took place near Hima north of Sylhet on May 14 Radio Pakistan admitted that the survivors (of freedom fighters) fled to remote villages[39] Pakistani soldiers killed Dr Shama uddin Ahmed head of the Department and Colonel Ziaur Rehman Principal of the Medical College while they were performing an operation In the first week of May the Pakistani soldiers killed at least 5000 workers in tea gardens of Sylhet district

The town of Rajshahi was also heavily bombed in the second week of April. A group of foreign correspondents who visited the city in the second week of May saw the city desolate, the naked area flattened out at places one building an ideal position for a strong point smashed to pieces and mere burnt out shells filled high with debris and rubble witnesses to the battle on April 14 when the liberation forces defence was finally overcome The army authorities says Reuter admitted they used bazookas and rocket-launchers to wrest control of this town from the liberation forces The city population looked dazed and frightened. Villagers in Nator showed the journalists a well where the bodies were seen rotting below[40] Nearly 400 men of the EPR lost their lives when they were perfidiously attacked by the Pakistani troops in Dinajpur cantonment on the night of March 27 About 300 EBR men were able to escape. They joined the Libaration Army A Bengali Brigadier Syed Sajjad Hussain was mercilessly butchered

In the second week of March, the Army arrested the Deputy Commissioner of Comilla Most of the sub-divisional officers deserted their posts. One young officer however took charge of the affairs in most parts of Comilla district He organised civil defence measures Men of the regular police forces joined the liberation forces.[41] The Pakistani army aided by heavy bombardment attacked the city to capture it in the last week of March The liberation Army under the command of 32 year-old Major Khalid Shaffiqul Huq encircled the town and captured it on April 7 On the same day Rajshahi and Bogra were liberated The operational commander of the Punjab Regiment Major Aslam and seven others were killed in the engagement. Another detachment led by Major Gen. Majid took over Sylhet. The liberation army attacked Jessore and other places. The Pakistan army captured Comilla and Feni in the last week of April. Radio Pakistan admitted that the freedom fighters blew up a bridge at Shahbagh[42] The Pakistani army occupied Brahmanbaria in the first week of May Two medica

missionaries belonging to the Baptist Church of New Zealand Miss Dorothy and Miss Nelvi Taylor told press reporters on May 18 that the army looted the town before destroying it They said that the entire town was virtually wiped out[13]

Foreign correspondents who visited Bangla Desh on a conducted tour in the first week of May 1971 confirmed the mass killings and wanton destruction committed by the invading hordes Mort Rosenblum of the Associated Press of America said that it was a genocide This is what he wrote

Vultures too full to fly perch along the Ganga river in grim contentment They have had perhaps more than half a million murdered people to feed upon since March Civil war flamed through Pakistan s eastern wing from March 25 pushing the bankrupt nation to the edge of ruin Aside from calamitous economic losses the killing and devastaticn defy belief

From a well at Natore fetid gases rise up around bones and rotting flesh A tiny child gazes at a break in the laven der carpet of water hyacinths in a nearby pond where his parents bodies were dumped

No one really knows how many Bengali families the army machinegunned or how many migrant ettler Bengalis slashed to death But responsible estimates of all deaths start in five figures and range over a million

In the port city of Chittagong a blood spattered doll lies in a heap of clothing and excrement in a jute mill recreation club where 180 women and children were butchered

Along the road to it entire blocks of Bengali homes and shops were blasted and burned to the ground as a reveng ing Pakistan Army settled the score

While describing the horrible scenes witnessed in Dacca Rosenblum said

Pakistani soldiers killed 14 faculty members of the University Altogether more than 200 students were killed Army units shelled and set fire to two newspaper

offices then set upon the Bengali population in general More than a dozen markets were et afire and at least 25 blocks were devastated in Dacca Bengali jewellery shops in the Shakari Pathe quarter were blown apart and two villages inside Dacca Race Course were attacked with almost holy war fury by troops Reasoned accounts projected from body counts at mass graves say about 10 000 persons were shot dead or burned to death in the first few nights in Dacca

He confirms that the freedom fighters were still in occupation of Cox Bazar on May 4 The Pakistani Army captured it on the next day In Jessore the invading army employing mortor and heavy guns pounded to rubble the three block markets of two storey brick buildings Homes were blasted off their foundations Soldiers asked the Bengalis to come out of their houses and then machine gunned them

Rosenblum revealed that the Pakistani army clearly made attempts to cover the facts Bamboo screens were erected along some roads Careful repairs—designed not to look like repairs—were made on University buildings Reporters had to fight to slip away to see the worst damage He added

Pakistani officers now speak of Phase Two a selective elimination of persons considered dangerous [14]

The Financial Times correspondent said

All the towns visited had considerable areas of destruction and some areas of complete devastation so much so that they were reminiscent of bombed European cities at the end of World War II So in the cities of East Pakistan today the population appears dazed bewildered and stunned From the air many burnt out villages were visible frequently close to railways and roads In one area a still smoking village was observable One impartial Asian source who estimated the tidal wave disaster in terms of two lakhs (when there were almost certainly more) maintains that the total is in the neighbourhood of 500 000 [15]

In the initial stages of the war there was practically no organised liberation army In different cities the leaders of the Awami League and officers and men of the E P R. and E B R and police who could save their lives from a sudden onslaught assumed leadership and fought heroically The leaders of the Awami League could not meet together to form a provisional Government The struggle depended on local leaders who had no arms nor any experience of war However enthusiasm was there People in large numbers stormed the hordes They waged many a battle in which they suffered heavy casualties It is said that Sheikh Mujibur Rehman had formed his cabinet on March 25 when the martial law authorities cracked down on Bangle Desh. However the members of the cabinet could not meet together On March 28 Major Ziauddin Khan announced the formation of Bangla Desh Government with its headquarters somewhere in the Comilla Sylhet sector The character of the Government was unidentified and its composition was undisclosed In the first week of April senior colleagues of Sheikh Mujibur Rehman met together at a place near Meherpur in Kushtia district On April 10 a formal announcement confirming the Declaration of Independence already made by Banglabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rehman was broadcast over the Bangla Desh Betar Kendra The Declaration confirmed and resolved that till such time as a Constitution is framed Banglabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rehman shall be the President of the Republic and that Syed Nazrul Islam shall be the Vice President of the Republic In the event of there being no President or the President being unable to enter upon his office or being unable to exercise his powers and duties due to any reason whatsoever the Vice President shall have and exercise all the powers duties and responsibilities herein conferred on the President.

The new Republic undertook to observe and give effect to all duties and obligations developed upon us as a member

of the family of nations and by the charter of the United Nations

Professor Yusuf Ali administered to the Vice President oath of office and offered him the office of Acting President

The Acting President appointed his six member cabinet with Mr Tajuddin Ahmed as Prime Minister Mr Khondkar Mushtaq Ahmad was appointed Foreign Minister Col A G Osmani was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Bangla De h forces

On the morning of April 17 amidst thunderous cheers from a crowd of 10 000 people which included contingents of the E P R The Ansars and the Mujahids the Democra tic Republic of Bangla Desh was proclaimed as a formally constituted State. About forty foreign journalists watched and recorded the proceedings The ceremony took place in Bhabarpara village which is located in the Meherpur subdivision of Kushtia district and is 18 miles north west of Chaudanga which was captured by the Pakistan army on April 16 To mark the occasion the Prime Minister renamed the village as Mujib Nagar He told the corres pondents that this place was selected to ensure their safety and then pointing to a reporter passing by the dais he added You can go deep into Bangla Desh along this road uninterrupted He himself had followed the route to reach the meeting place

Mr Islam was given the salute by a contingent of armed Ansars A contingent of the EPR presented arms to him The function which began with the singing of a popular Bengali song— Sonar Bangla Amy Tomaya Bhalobashi (Oh Dear Bengal I love you) It was attended by all the Prime Minister s colleagues including Captain Mansur Ali Mr A H M Qamarazzaman and Commander in Chief Captain Osman and a large number of members of Parliament and the Assembly

Speaking at the function Prime Minister Tajuddin Ahmed said Bengla Desh is at war It had been given no other choice than to secure its right of self determination

through a national liberation struggle against the colonial oppression of West Pakistan He appealed to friendly countries for arms aid and to the big Powers like the USA the USSR and China to put an embargo on the supply of arms to Pakistan He said that it was regrettable that the arms given to Pakistan for defence against external aggression were being used against an unarmed people to suppress their liberation struggle The Commander in Chief of the Bangla Desh Army Col Osman said that the war would go on He revealed that about 1 00 000 men women and children were killed by the Pakistan Army[46] The Bangalis living all over the world greeted this proclamation with enthusiasm In New York Washington London Paris and Singapur they held meetings and demonstrations to proclaim their loyalty to their Government The Vice Consul of Pakistan to the U N Mr A H Mahmud Ali repudiated all connections with the Pakistan Government and pledged his full loyalty to the Bangla Desh Government Mr Justice Aly Syed Chaudhri Judge of the Dacca High Court and Vice Chancellor of Dacca University agreed to act as a representative of the Bangla Desh Government in the U K Two Bengali diplomats of the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi Second Secretary M K M Shahabuddin and the Assistant Press Attache Mr Amjudul Huq (who had announced their decision to break with the Pakistan Government on April 6) now announced their allegiance to the Bangla Desh Government Pakistan's Deputy High Commissioner in Calcutta Mr Hussain Ali along with other Bengali officials proclaimed allegiance to Bangla Desh Thus the office of the Pakistan High Commission became the office of the Bangla Desh Information Centre Thousands of Bengali officials in Bangla Desh joined the administration of their own Government A number of Bengali seamen employed in Pakistani ships joined the ranks of the freedom fighters Pakistani currency notes with the marking Joi Bangla were accepted by the people of the Republic as their own country The Pakistan Government's decision

to cancel this currency and its particular reference to currency notes with these markings proves that this currency was considered legal tender even in Pak occupied territories in the last week of May Radio Pakistan had to use the words Bangla Desh Government in its broadcast even to criticise it[47] The people of Bangla Desh had no faith left in Yahya Khan s Government The unending sea of miserable humanity surging from Bangla Desh to India is itself a clear proof that the Bengalis hate the heirs of the ruthless Nazis of West Pakistan The slogan of Islam in danger has failed to force them into submission and slavery

NOTES

1 UNI message published in *Th Indian Express* March 27 1971
2 *Times Weekly* New Delhi April 25 1971 *The Blitz* May 24 1971 *The Indian Express* April 20 1971
3 *Patriot* April 10 1971
4 *The Times of India* April 22 1971
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29 UNI despatch published in *The Times of India* April 25 1971
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39 Radio Pakistan News Bulletin No 113 May 11 1971
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47 Radio Pakistan News Bulletin No 128 May 31 1971

Chapter XIII

Bangla Desh, India and Big Powers

According to Mr Bhutto Ayub Khan told him that he wished to see East Bengal secede rather than let an East Bengal majority govern Pakistan Bhutto told a reporter of *The Washington Star* in an interview on December 13 1970 that Ayub started thinking in such terms in 1964[1] This may or may not be true but it reflects the ambition of the West Pakistani rulers to keep the people of Bangla Desh in slavery They did not allow them to assert their right of self-determination Pakistani rulers who represent a minority section of the population even in West Pakistan are employing every method to crush the will of the people of Bangla Desh About half a million Bengalis have been massacred their residences destroyed hundreds of villages burnt and about six million people forced to leave their country to seek refuge in India In order to justify this genocide the Pakistani rulers charge the freedom fighters with conspiring against the integrity of Pakistan. They are accused of being traitors to Islam In keeping with their tradition to blame India for all troubles of their own creation the Pakistani rulers are telling the world that a few mischiefmongers and

26 *Ibid* April 19 1971
27 Michel Hornsbey's report reproduced in *The Statesman* April 13 1971
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Indian infiltrators had created this trouble otherwise the people of East Bengal were with their rulers. None has however believed this bundle of lies. Millions of Bengali refugees in India are a glaring proof of the worst kind of brutalities perpetrated in Bangla Desh. The solidarity of a nation cannot be preserved by wholesale slaughter of innocent men, women and children. The glory of Islam cannot be heightened by criminal assaults on Muslim women. The barbarities of the West Pakistani soldiers have moved a large and increasing section of the civilised world to condemn the calculated genocide. Pakistani aggression against Bangla Desh has not remained an internal problem of Pakistan. It has become an international problem. For India it became her own problem when the unfortunate victims of Pakistan's barbarism and aggression started entering her territories to seek refuge. Even otherwise India could not have remained a silent spectator to the calculated murder of a nation whose only crime was to demand basic human rights. The Indian Parliament on March 31, 1971 unanimously passed a resolution expressing its profound sympathy for and solidarity with the people of East Bengal in their struggle for a democratic way of life. It demanded immediate cessation of the use of force and the massacre of defenceless people and called upon all peoples and governments to take urgent and constructive steps to prevail upon the Government of Pakistan to put an end to the systematic decimation of people which amounted to genocide.[3] Despite the fact that Pakistan has attacked India thrice within the last 23 years and has never spared any opportunity to create internal as well as external troubles for India, the latter has always tried to avoid confrontation with Pakistan. The sole aim of Pakistan's political or military alignments with the Western block and now with Communist China is to harass and weaken India. "She has tried to acquire maximum armaments to be able to dismember India. Even before her troubles began in East Bengal she was indulging in sabotage in Kashmir, Nagaland, the Mizo district and Assam. Indian public opinion hailed

the victory of democratic forces in East Bengal because it was expected that the new emerging forces in Pakistan would *make their country* live like a good neighbour Naturally Pakistani aggression against these forces shocked public opinion in India All sections of population have expressed sympathy with the people of Bangla Desh Despite this situation the Indian Government has not extended any military aid to the freedom fighters She has not even recognised the Bangla Desh Government as yet It is difficult to predict the future However India is trying to create a favourable public opinion in democratic and peace loving countries of the world Pakistani rulers are still indulging in anti-India activities In addition to pushing out millions of Bengalis into India the Pakistani rulers are sending spies and saboteurs in the guise of refugees Many of these infiltrators have been arrested A number of Pakistani agents who tried to poison wells have also been arrested Pakistani planned attempts to organise communal riots in India have been discovered and foiled The civilised world must realise India s difficult position in this context Due credit must be given to the leaders of the Indian Government who have acted with much restraint in the face of the growing demand for strong action against Pakistan The Big Powers will have to discharge their duty towards the victims of Pakistani aggression. In case they fail to act swiftly it will be difficult for India to remain a silen spectator Indian public opinion will not tolerate the emergence of pro Chine e elements to dominate the political life of Bangla Desh In case the present struggle fails these elements are bound to capture leadership in Bangla Desh Chinese willingness to give military aid to Pakistani rulers is a serious threat to the peace and stability of the whole sub-continent

Eminent journalists and political leaders in the USA, the U K West Germany and other countries have condemned Pakistan s barbarities in Bangla Desh. President Podgorny of the USSR and the American President Mr Nixon together with the Prime Minister of the U K have expressed

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Eminent journalists and political leaders in the USA, the U K West Germany and other countries have condemned Pakistan s barbarities in Bangla Desh President Podgorny of the USSR and the American President Mr Nixon together with the Prime Minister of the U K have expressed

anxiety over Bangla Desh The Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the American Senate Mr Fulbright has demanded stoppage of American aid to Pakistan Mr Cornelius Gallagher Chairman US House of Representatives Foreign Affairs sub committee on Asian and Pacific Affairs who visited refugee camps in India said he was convinced that terrorism barbarities and genocide of no small magnitude have been committed in East Bengal Mr Gallghar saw refugee children with their hands ripped off Interviews with a cross section of refugees convinced him that charges of geno cide were credible Thousands of Hindus had now become innocent victims of the calculated reign of terror by the Pakistani army to inspire and inflame communal tensions While demanding the unconditional release of Sheikh Mujibur Rehman Mr Gallagher said that what happened was not an internal matter of Pakistan When five million people had to flee it became an external matter and the world community should consider this in its true and proper focus [3] The Chairman of the Senate Judiciary sub committee on Refugees Senator Edward Kennedy condemned Pakistani atrocities and said it was a story of indiscriminate killings and executions of dissident political leaders students and of citizens and civilians suffering and dying The situation in East Pakistan should be particularly distressing to Americans he continued It is our military hardware our guns tanks and aircraft which are contributing much to the sufferings and this is being done apparently in violation of negotiated aggreements on the use of military aid to the Central Government of Pakistan [4]

On another occasion Senator Kennedy said that the USA should use economic aid as a lever to put pressure on the Pakistan Government to settle the political dispute by negotiations [5] The Former US Ambassador to India Mr Chester Bowles also called for immediate end of all U S economic aid to Pakistan He dimissed the argument that what was happening in East Bengal was an internal affair of Pakistan [6]

Under the caption "The Vultures Of Bengal" *The New York Times* in its editorial on May 13 said The vultures brood over the ravaged towns of East Bengal giving testimony to the slaughter which took place during the Pakistan Army's savage crackdown on East Bengal The paper asked the Government to stop economic aid to Pakistan to force her abandon her policy of repression in the east and to co operate fully in the international affairs to deny the vultures of Bengal further human prey "

An American journalist who visited Jessore in the first week of April said that the Pakistan armies which swept into the contonment through the outskirts of the town destroyed rows of peasants homes and shot down everything that moved While families he said were machine gunned as they fled from their burning huts other bodies lying in fields and ditches showed evidence of bayonet-stabbing[8]

The UN Secretary General U Thant, described the happenings in East Bengal as one of the most tragic episodes and a very terrible blot in the pages of human history[9]

According to *The Saturday Review of New York* the American State Department was in possession of authenticated descriptions of countless incidents in East Bengal which had become a locked in area of authorised slaughter" Giving documented episodes of brutality by the Pakistan Army particularly against intellectuals and students the paper said that these represented a small fraction of authenticated accounts of widespread killings[10]

Peter Hazelhurst of *The Times* (London) called it a genocide and said that the Pakistani soldiers were shooting down Bengalis in the streets in Jessore although the army was in undisputed control of the city[11] Two influential British newspapers *The Sunday Times* and *The Sunday Telegraph* called on the British Government to take strong action including economic pressure against Pakistan to end the genocide[1] A Labour member of the New Zealand

Parliament Trevor J Young was told by refugee women that the West Pakistani troops were after turning Bengali wombs into their concubines to satisfy their sex perversion He said that the troops were poisoning the standing crops in Bangla Desh He advocated international intervention in Bangla Desh[13]

The British Labour Party s spokesman on foreign affairs Mr Dennis Healy told the House of Commons on May 11 that the situation in East Bengal represented a human tragedy with few precedents in recent history He demanded U N intervention[14] Mr Woodrow Wyatt accused Pak troops of indulging in butchery[15] Another British Labour M P Mr Bruce Dougles Mann charged Pakistan with committing genocide and the deliberate and indiscriminate killing of men and women He urged Britain to recognise the Bangla Desh Government and suspend all aid and credit to Pakistan

The Guardian described the Pakistani troops atrocities as an arrogant crime against humanity The paper accused Pakistani rulers of committing treachery to the people of East Bengal because while Yahya Khan negotiated with Mujib his generals planned carnage[16]

A senior journalist from Dacca who slipped out of Pakistan on June 7 said that Pakistani officers are abducting and raping young women particularly belonging to the families of the Bengali intelligentsia[16a]

Accusations of genocide by the Pakistan Government troops against Hindus and Bengali Muslims in East Bengal were made by Mr Anthony Mascarenhas Assistant Editor of the *Morning News* Karachi in a special two and a half page article in the *Sunday Times* Mr Mascarenhas who was the paper s correspondent in Pakistan quit Pakistan with his family to tell the world why more than five million refugees had left East Bengal for India risking famine and cholera He was one of eight Pakistani journalists to fly to East Bengal in April shortly after the Pakistan Army had moved against the Bengal rebels

The aim of Gen. Yahya Khan and the Pakistani army Mr Mascarenhas says is long term colonisation of East Bengal by genocide of Hindus, elimination of Bengali Muslim intelligentsia Islamisation of the masses re-settlement of non Bengali Muslims in East Bengal re distribution of Hindu property to Muslims to reward loyalty to the military and chastisement and reduction of the population by famine

When the Hindus have been eliminated by death and flight their property will be used as a golden carrot to win over the under-privileged Muslim middleclass They will provide the base for erecting administrative and political tructures in the future

Unlike some foreign journalists who depict Gen Yahya Khan as the prisoner of the Junta Mr Mascarenhas asserts that Gen Yahya Khan took the calculated risk of this vast operation designed to change the complexion of the East Bengal population

In spite of terror and destruction by Pakistani troops isolated and unco-ordinated guerrilla activities have bogged down the Pakistani army in many places For monsoon Pakistan has acquired from China some 80 ton shallow-draught river gunboats and motorised hundreds of country craft.

As for the clear danger of famine the Chairman of the Pakistan Agricultural Department Bank told Mr Mascarenhas recently in Karachi The famine is the result of their (Bengalis) acts of sabotage So let them die Perhaps then the Bengalis will come to their senses

Afghanistan s leading daily *Afghan Millat* urged that Bangla Desh Government should be recognised by all the world powers The paper charged Pakistani rulers with attempting to mislead world opinion [16]

The Democratic Action Party of Malaya condemned the genocide by Pakistani troops in a strongly worded note handed over to the Pakistan High Commissioner in Kuala

that the party be allowed to send a team to East Bengal to evaluate the actual conditions for itself [17]

Syria's leading semi official daily *Al-Thawara* condemned Pakistani rulers for organising a campaign of mass killing in East Bengal The influential Cairo Weekly *Rose-al Yusaf* condemned the mass killings in East Bengal The Palestinian guerilla leader Arafat condemned the wholesale slaughter in East Bengal [18]

The Komanist the organ of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia warned the ruling military circles of Pakistan that social and political conflicts which had caused a split in that country cannot be solved by violence and armed force [19]

In a sharply-worded appeal the Soviet President Nikolai Podgorny asked Yahya Khan to stop bloodshed and seek a political settlement Yahya Khan s reply to the Soviet Union s President did not satisfy the Soviet official circles *The Pravda* ridiculed the Pakistani claim that normalcy had been restored in East Bengal [20]

The military junta of Pakistan is desperately trying to cover up its ignominous action by creating the impression of an Indo Pakistan war or even conflict While President Yahya Khan invented the story of Indian infiltration into Bangla Desh his Martial Law Administrator claimed to have captured Indian arms and ammunition from the so called infiltrators The Polish Embassy in West Pakistan at once exposed this myth when it revealed that Poland had supplied these arms for hunting to Pakistan However Major General Mohammed Akbar Khan Director General of the Pakistan Armed Forces Intelligence Services charged India with conspiring to disintegrate Pakistan by military intervention [21] Pakistan s representative to the UNO Agha Shah claimed that only 10 000 refugees had entered India while President Yahya Khan said that the Indian Government had been circulating highly exaggerated and distorted account of events which led to border crossings He added Millions of Indian Muslims have been driven out of their homes but the

Indian Government had refused to take them back The number of refugees' he said has been inflated by India by adding to them the unemployed and homeless people of West Bangal Radio Pakistan went a step further when it blamed India for putting obstacles and even physically stopping bonafide Pakistanis from returning [25]

While Pakistan is begging for help from the USA Pakistani propaganda machinery is blaming the USA also along with India for all that has happened in East Bengal The most fantastic lie contained in this propaganda was that Sheikh Mujibur Rehman had been in the pay of America [26] It is clear that this is being done to secure military aid from China The Chinese Premier Chou En lai and Vice-Premier Han Nin lung told Pakistan that China would continue to support the solidarity and integrity of the country *The Peoples Daily* alleged that in league with the super powers India was cheming international intervention in Pakistan [8]

While the economy of Pakistan is cracking under the burden of the present war and the rulers are begging for foreign aid the people in West Pakistan are told that Pakistan had enough food She was not in need of any foreign help The foreign powers who were offering aid should approach India whose people were starving

One thing is clear Pakistani rulers have succeeded in turning the Bengali majority into a minority Yahya Khan s henchmen like Abdul Qayyum and Tufail Mohammmed are demanding that fresh elections be held after what they call a realistic assessment of the population of different provinces

The Jamait ul Ulema Chief Ghulam Ghaus Hazarvi has said

> If we look at the problem realistically it will be found that the general belief about East Pakistan having a majority of the population is a myth. East Pakistan has suffered several natural calamities like cyclones and floods followed by disturbed conditions This would have made

it impossible for it to maintain its precarious lead in population Hence it would be best if a fresh assessment is made and seats allocated to different provinces of the country on the basis of authentic census data [29]

These statements provide an obvious clue to the motivations for pushing out a large number of Bengalis from Bangla Desh If Pakistan refuses to create suitable conditions for the return of the refugees to East Bengal the next step will be Pakistani military aggression against India She is trying to create communal tension in eastern India so that it may lead to communal disturbances in this region For this pernicious game of politics she is sending innumerable communal infiltrators spies and saboteurs into India to create communal trouble in this country [30] Some of these spies were caught while mixing poison in drinking water wells [31] In Bangla Desh the Jamaat Islami and Muslim League are encouraged to indulge in communal riots and killings

It is significant to note that on October 24 1970 on the eve of the 25th anniversary of the United Nations a brochure put out by the Pakistan Mission in New York said with a fanfare that General Yahya Khan comes from a well known family of descendents of King Nadir Shah who conquered the city of Delhi in 1739 The Pakistan President however assured the awed UN pressmen that he had no idea of going to Delhi to lift the peacock throne I am a bad representative of my ancestor I have no intention of conquering Delhi You may say since then degeneration has set in in my family he said In his official address at the UN General Assembly s commemorative session the General raked up the Kashmir question with a plea for the withdrawal of Indian and Pakistani forces from Kashmir so that its people can decide their future without any coercion from outside [31]

Under the caption Shades of Nadir Shah *The Tribune* wrote in an editorial on October 24 1970 that the Pakistani leader s nostalgia is affecting However much water has flown down the Yamuna since the Persian conqueror s

days and the Indians now are in no acute fear of Nadir Shah s breed

Actually Yahya Khan was preparing for a showdown against India His parleys with the Chinese leaders in November 1970 his attempts to secure armaments from different sources his secret organisation of spies and saboteurs in Kashmir his order to recruit university students in the Army and the hijacking and destruction of an Indian aircraft aimed in launching an armed aggression against India to revive the traditions of Nadir Shah When he failed to do so he asked his blood thirsty soldiers to pounce upon the unarmed people of Bengal What he could not achieve in New Delhi he planned to achieve in Dacca While Nadir Shah ransacked Delhi and after butchering the innocent people of that city went to the Golden Mosque of Chandni Chowk for a thanks giving prayer to Allah Yahya Khan followed in the footsteps of his ancestor by going to the historic mosque of Dataganj Baksh in Lahore to say prayers while his mercenaries were indulging in killing innocent Bengalis destroying their cities and abducting their women and daughters to achieve what he called Islamic glory

History will record the name of Yahya Khan on the top of the list of ruthless murderers The leaders of the world, who are witnessing this ghastly drama as silent spectators will not be forgiven by future historians because keeping silence means giving abetment to a criminal

The war of independence has not stopped The freedom fighters are resorting to guerilla warfare Thousands of young Bengali patriots are receiving intensive training in guerilla warfare They are determined to carry on their struggle The Pakistani invaders have not been able to occupy the whole of Bangla Desh The Pakistan rulers have failed to buy the loyalties of even persons like Nurul Amin. Maulana Bhashani who used to rely on the Chinese, now feels that the so-called leaders of the international libera tion movement have proved worst reactionaries. Like

Tajuddin Ahmed and Osmani he is determined to fight. The eighty year old Maulana who is one of the founders of Pakistan said

> All parts of Bangla Desh today are smeared with the blood of one million Bengalis and through the stream of blood the independence of Bangla Desh would definitely come [3]

The Prime Minister of Bangla Desh Tajuddin Ahmed declared There is no room for compromise Pakistan must withdraw her forces We are determined to defend our independence [33]

NOTES

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4 *The New York Times* April 2 1971
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15 16 PTI despatch published in *The Motherland* May 1 1971 *The Statesman* April 24 1971 *Th Hindustan Times* April 1 1971
15a *The Statesman* June 13 1971
17 *Ibid* April 21 1971
18 *The National Herald* April 23 1971 *Patriot* April 14 1971
19 *The Indian Express* April 7 1971
20 *The Times of India* April 5 1970 *Patriot* May 2 1971
21 22 *The Indian Express* May 6 1971 *Ibid* May 9 1971
23 *The Indian Express* May 6 1971 *Th Statesman* May 21 1971
25 *Th Times of India* June 6 1971

26 PAI daspatch from Beirut published in *The Motherland* April 3 1971
27 *The Tribune* April 15 1971 *Th Sundiy Standard* May 23 1971
28 *The Hindustan Times* April 13 1971
29 *Patriot* May 26 1971
30 Prof Samar Guha in *The National Herald* June 8 1971
31 Shades of Nadir Shah in *The Tribune* October 24 1970
32 *The Statesman* June 8 1971
33 *Ibid* June 8 1971

EPILOGUE

Exaggerated notion of what the Super Powers can be expected to do in taking to task the Pakistani rulers responsible for loot arson murder rape and destruction in Bangla Desh have inevitably caused bitter disappointment in India It is generally said that the West Pakistani Generals are getting away with murder because countries with an easy conscience continue to take shelter behind the argument that Bangla Desh is Pakistan s internal affairs While this analysis is justified to a certain extent we should not ignore the fact that the external policy of each country whether big or small is determined by its own interests While many other powers have their own identical internal problems big powers have their permamant interests in the Indo Paki tan sub Continent However it is a great achievement for the freedom fighters that the present attitude of these powers is quite different[1] from what it was at the time of the Pak aggression in 1947 and 1965 This time no big power has defended the brutal actions of the Pakistani rulers and it a significant development that the sympathy and support for the victims of this aggression in these countries has crossed party lines The merits of the case for Bangla Desh have been widely understood as also the brutality with which it has been treated by the military junta The Indian Government by refraining from direct intervention in Bangla Desh has been able to convince the big powers that it was a popular upsurge and a political settlement of the issue is imperative for persuading millions of refugees to go back to their homes in an atmosphere of peace and safety It is difficult to foresee future developments in this respect but we canno ignore the fact that at least two big powers

are to a certain extent keen to see that a political settlement by Pakistan's rulers with the real representatives of the people namely Sheikh Mujibur Rehman and his colleagues and not with quislings or flunkeys would solve the real issues[2]

There is no denying the fact that the Pakistani rulers have tried to kill two birds with one stone From 1947 to 1964 they forced more than forty million Bengali Hindus to seek shelter in India This time they have forced more than fifty million Bengalis including the Muslim supporters of the Awami League to quit Bangla Desh Thus they have succeded in reducing the Bengalis into a minority in the overall population of Pakistan Besides this they have created gigantic political social and economic problemns for India Pakistani rulers will not take back all these refugees This is why their propagandists claim that India is inflating the numbers by cluttering refugee camps with her own unemployed and destitutes to bargain for foreign aid This is really a difficult situation for India but we should be realist enough to admit that an internationaly-sponsered movement for the independence of Bangla Desh cannot be expected unless the freedom fighters are themselves able to organise themselves into a strong force.

International public opinion is convinced of the justification for independence for Bangla Desh Pakistani propagandists have failed to throw dust into the eyes of the people of the world[3] Nobody believes that millions of Bengalis who have been forced to quit Bangla Desh are Indian agents or traitors Everybody knows that despite the presence of the Pakistani army of occupation in Bangla Desh the situation is still explosive The World Bank and the International Monetry Mission have revealed that the communication system in Bangla Desh is paralysed and it needs at least Rs 5 25 crores to restore it. It has further reported that the jute crop[4] which provides the L[illegible] single source of foreign exchange earning for Pa[illegible] economy will decline by at least 25 per cent O[illegible]

Radio Pakistan [illegible] extensive damage to railway tracks, rails, bridges, culverts and ferries by anti-state elements.[8] On May 21 an official spokesman in Dacca said that [illegible] by the now defunct Awami League had cost the province about five hundred crores of rupees by way of economic dislocation.[9] In addition to this the burden of an army of occupation in Bangla Desh on the cracking economic structure of Pakistan can very well be imagined.

The freedom fighters are not going to be idle. There is no dearth of manpower for them. Almost all able-bodied refugees are anxious to join the ranks of the freedom fighters. At least fifteen thousand refugees are getting training in guerilla warfare. A large number of guerillas have gone to distant places in Bangla Desh leaving their families behind in India. Radio Pakistan has admitted that thousands of men and officers of the EPR and EBR had joined the freedom fighters.[1] Already parts of Bangla Desh are under their control. General Tikka Khan has himself admitted that a few pockets remain under the control of anti-Pakistan elements. Within the next few weeks the newly trained guerillas are expected to resume their warfare on a comparatively bigger scale. The Pakistani military junta may try to install some puppet regime but no such regime will be able to control the guerilla onslaughts. The growing resentment against the military junta in West Pakistan will also be a determining factor in the future developments.

The Indian Government by refraining from direct intervention in Bangla Desh has foiled Pakistani attempts to mislead the international public opinion. None now believes that it is an Indo-Pak conflict. Indian recognition of Bangla Desh Government would have helped Pakistan to mislead the world and this would have created enormouf difficulties for India. Although Pakistani propagandists are still indulging in anti-India campaigns nobody believes in their allegations. The Pakistani rulers are now feeling the pinch of international pressure. The officially controlled *Pakistan Times* for instance has said that *it is not coincidental that Russia*

America and Britain have all joined hands to pressurise Pakistan into accepting virtual partition of the country [8] This is the most significant development It is generally assumed that Sheikh Mujibur Rehman would not agree to enter into any negotiations with the murderers whose hands are dripping with human blood I however feel that the Sheikh by refusing to go underground on March 25 had visualised that a situation may arise in which the Pakistani rulers may be compelled to try a negotiated settlement with him It is an open secret that all the three big powers have warned the Pakistan Governmeht about their anxiety for the safety of Sheikh Mujibur Rehman. There are reasons to believe that military junta has already contacted the Sheikh through the daughter of the late H S Suhrawardy She is reported to have failed in her mission but similar attempts may be made in the near future It is difficult to predict the result of such parleys However it is clear that in case the junta continues to follow aggressive policies the situation will deteriorate As far as India is concerned she will have to help the people of Bangla Desh to achieve independence The junta is not in a position to wage war against India but considerations of a false prestige may induce them to provoke such a conflict India must be prepared for such an eventuality At the same time organised and systematic efforts to inform the people of the world of the real situation in Bangla Desh should continue We should not expect any basic change in the outlook of countries like Persia Turkey Jordan and Saudi Arabia They are allies of Pakistan However organised efforts to educate public opinion in other Arab countries should be dilgently made We should not ignore the fact that Western Powers support to Israel against the Arab countries is partially responsible for the Arabs present lukewarm attitude towards Bangla Desh Maulana Bhashani's earlier statements charging the U.S A with conspiring against the integrity of Pakistan are also responsible for this state of affairs Bengali leaders including

Bhashani should visit these countries to remove such a misunderstanding

NOTES

1 In the past Americans used to say that Calcutta based communists attempt to stir up the excitable Bengalis—particularly Hindus and college students (Robert D Cambell *Pakistan Emerging Democracy* (New york 1963) page 64
2 *The Indian Express* June 11 1971
3 A British Parliamentarian Ted Leadbitter in a letter to the Pakistan High Commission in London wrote Your President and your Government are responsible for burning murder rape disease and fear on a scale unparalleled in any country The bloodshed on your hands is there for everyone to see and no diplomatic nicety will prevent me from condemning the stupidity of your leaders (*The Motherland* June 12 1971)
4 *The Hindustan Times* June 13 1971
5 6-7 8 Pyami Pakistan exrayed in *The Motherland* June 1971 Radio Pakistan News Bulletin Nos 136 138

APPENDIX

To the People of the World

By
Mr Tajuddin Prime Minister of Bangla Desh

Bangla Desh is at war It has been given no choice but to secure its right of self determination through a national liberation struggle against the colonial oppression of West Pakistan

In the face of positive attempts by the Government of Pakistan to distort the facts in a desperate attempt to cover up their war of genocide in Bangla Desh the world must be told the circumstances under which the peace loving people of Bangla Desh were driven to substitute armed struggle for parliamentary politics to realise the just aspirations of the people of Bangla Desh

The Six Point Programme for autonomy for Bangla Desh within Pakistan had been put forward in all sincerity by the Awami League as the last possible solution to preserve the integrity of Pakistan Fighting the elections to the National Assembly on the issue of Six Points the Awami league won

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Mr Tajuddin made this statement on April 17 1971 when he assumed the charge of his Government at Mujib Nagar, the provisional head quarters of the Bangla Desh Government

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Following his decision to boycott the Assembly Mr Bhutto launched a campaign of intimidation against all other parties in West Pakistan to prevent them from attending the session. In this test there is evidence that Lt Gen Umer Chairman of the National Security Council and close associate of Yahya with a view to strengthening Mr Bhutto's hand personally pressurised various West Wing leaders not to attend the Assembly. In spite of this display of pressure tactics by Mr Bhutto and Lt Gen Umer all members of the National Assembly from West Pakistan except the PPP and the Qayyum Muslim League had booked their seats to East Pakistan for the session of 3rd March.

Within the QML itself half their members had booked their seats and there were signs of revolt within the PPP where many members were wanting to come to Dacca. Faced with the breakdown of this joint front against Bangla Desh General Yahya obliged Mr Bhutto on 1st March by postponing the Assembly not for any finite period but *sine die*. Moreover he dismissed the Governor of East Pakistan Admiral S M Ahsan who was believed to be one of the moderates in his administration. The Cabinet with its component of Bengalis was also dismissed so that all power was concentrated in the hands of the West Wing military Junta.

In these circumstances Yahya's gesture could not be seen as anything but an attempt to frustrate the popular will by colluding with Mr Bhutto. The National Assembly was the only forum where Bangla Desh could assert its voice and political strength and to frustrate this was a clear indication that Parliament was not to be the real source of power in Pakistan.

The reaction to the postponement in Bangla Desh was inevitable and spontaneous and throughout the land people took to the streets to record their protest at this arbitrary act. People now felt sure that Yahya never really intended to transfer power and was making a mockery of parliamentary politics. The popular mood felt that the rights of

Bangla Desh could never be realised within the framwork of Pakistan where Yahya could so blatantly frustrate the summoning of an Assembly proclaimed by his own writ and urged that Sheikh Mujibur Rehman mu t go for full independence

Sheikh Mujib however continued to seek a political settlement In calling for a programme of non cooperation on 3rd March he chose the weapon of peaceful confrontation against the army of occupation as an attempt to bring them to their enses This was in itself a major gesture in the face of the cold blooded firing on unarmed demonstrators on the 2nd and 3rd March which had already led to over a thou and casualties

The course of the non cooperation movement is now a part of history Never in the course of any liberation truggle has non cooperation been carried to the limits attained within Bangla Desh between 1st and 25th March Non cooperation was total No Judge of the High Court could be found to administer the oath of office to the new Governor Lt General Tikka Khan The entire civilian administration including the police and the Civil Service of Pakistan refused to attend office The people stopped supply of food to the army Even the civilian employees of the Defence establishment joined the boycott

Non cooperation did not stop at abstention from work The civilian administration and police positively pledged their support to Sheikh Mujibur Rehman and put them elves under his orders

In this situation the Awami League without being a formally constituted Government, was forced to take on the responsibility of keeping the economy and administration running whilst non cooperation lasted In this task they had the unqualified support not only of the people but the administration and business community The latter two subordinated themselves to the directives of the Awami League and accepted them as the sole authority to solve their various problems

In these unique circumstances the economy and administration were kept going in spite of the formidable problems arising out of the power vacuum which had suddenly emerged in Bangla Desh In spite of the lack of any formal authority Awami League volunteers in cooperation with the police maintained a level of law and order which was a considerable improvement on normal times

Faced with this demonstration of total support to the Awami League and this historic non cooperation movement General Yahya appears to have modified his tactics On the 6th March he still seemed determined to provoke a confrontation when he made his highly provocative speech putting the full blame for the crisis on the Awami League and not even referring to the architect of the crisis Mr Bhutto It seems that he expected a declaration of Independence on 7th March The Army in Dacca was put on full alert to crush the move and Lt Gen Tikka Khan was flown to replace Lt Gen Yakub to signify the hardening of attitudes within the Junta

Sheikh Mujib however once again opted for the path of political settlement in spite of massive public sentiment for independence In presenting his 4 point proposal for attending the National Assembly he not only had to contain the public mood but to leave a way open for Yahya to explore this last chance for a peaceful settlement

It is now clear that Yahya and his Generals never had the slightest intention of solving Pakistan s political crisis peacefully but were only interested in buying time to permit the reinforcement of their military machine within Bangla Desh Yahya s visit to Dacca was a mere cover for his plan of genocide It now becomes clear that contingency plans for such a crisis had already begun well in advance of the crisis

Shortly before Ist march tanks which had been sent north to Rangpur to defend the borders were brought back to Dacca From I t March the families of Army personnel were being sent off to West Pakistan on a priority basis along with the families of West Pakistani businessmen.

The military build up was accelerated after Ist March and continued throughout the talks upto 25th March Members of the armed forces dressed in civilian clothes were flown in PIA commercial flights via Ceylon C-130s carrying arms and provisions for the garrisons flew into Dacca It is estimated that upto one division with complementary support was brought into Bangla Desh between Ist and 25th March To ensure security the airport was put under strict airforce control and heavily guarded with artillery and machine gun nets whilst movement of passengers was strictly supervised An SSG Commando Group specially trained for undercover operations in sabotage and assassinations was distributed in key centres of Bangla Desh and were probably responsible for the attacks on Bengalis in Dacca and Saidpur in the two days before 25 March to provoke clashes between locals and non locals so as to provide a cover for military intervention

As part of this strategy of deception Yahya adopted the most concillatory posture in his task with Mujib In the talks beginning on 16th March he expressed regrets for what had happened and his sincere desire for a political settlement. In a crucial meeting with Sheikh Mujib he was asked to positively state the Junta s position on the Awami League s 4 point proposal He indicated that there were no serious objections and that an interim constitution could be worked out by the respective Advisers embodying the four points

The basic points on which agreement was reached were

(1) Lifting of Martial Law and transfer of power to a Civilian Government by a Presidential Proclamation.

(2) Transfer of power in the provinces to the majority parties

(3) Yahya to remain as President and in control of the Central Government

(4) Separate sittings of the National Assembly members from East and West Pakistan preparatory to a joint session of the House to finalise the Constitution

Contrary to the distortions now put out by both Yahya and Bhutto the proposals for separate sittings of the Assembly was suggested by Yahya to accommodate Mr Bhutto He cited the practical advantage that whilst 6 points provided a viable blueprint to regulate relations between Bangla Desh and the Centre its application would raise serious difficulties in the West Wing For this reason West Wing MNA s must be permitted to get together to work out a new pattern of relationships in the context of a Six Point constitution and the dissolution of One Unit

Once this agreement in principle had been reached between Sheikh Mujib and Yahya there was only the question of defining the powers of Bangla Desh vis a vis the Centre during the interim phase Here it was again jointly agreed that the distribution of power should as far as possible approximate to the final constitution approved by the National Assembly which it was expected would be based on Six Points

For working out this part of the interim settlement Mr M M Ahmed the Economic Adviser to the President was specially flown in In his talk with the Awami League advisers he made it clear that provided the political agreement had been reached there were no insuperable problem to working out some version of Six Points even in the interim period The final list of three amendments to the Awami League draft which he presented as suggestions indicated that the gap between the Government and Awami League position was no longer one of principle but remained merely over the precise phrasing of the proposals The Awami League in its sitting of 24th March accepted the amendments with certain minor change of language and there was nothing to prevent the holding of a final drafting session between the advisers of Yahya and Mujib when the interim constitution would be finalised

It must be made clear that at no stage was there any breakdown of talks or any indication by General Yahya or his team that they had a final position which could not be abandoned

The question of legal cover for the transfer of power is merely another belated fabrication by Yahya to cover his genocide He and his team had agreed that in line with the precedence of the Indian Independence Act of 1947 power could be transferred by Presidential Proclamation. The notice that there would be no legal cover to the arrangement raised subsequently by Mr Bhutto and endorsed by General Yahya was never a bone of contention between Sheikh Mujib and Yahya There is not the slightest doubt *that had Yahya indicated that a meeting of the National Assembly was essential to transfer power the Awami League* would not have broken the talks on such a minor legal technicality After all as the majority party it had nothing to fear from such a meeting and its acceptance of the decision for a separate sitting was designed to accommodate Mr Bhutto rather than a fundamental stand for the party

Evidence that agreement in principle between contending parties had been reached is provided by Mr Bhutto's own Press Conference on 25th March It is not certain what passed in the separate session between General Yahya and Mr Bhutto but there is evidence that deliberate falsehoods about the course of the talk with the Awami League were *fed to the PPP who were told that Sheikh Mujib* was determined to have a showdown and was daily escalating his demands Needless to say not the slightest indication of these misgivings had been raised in the meeting between the Awami League team and General Yahya's advisers where amicability and optimism prevailed to the end

Whilst hope for a *settlement* was *being raised* more omenous signs of the intentions of the army were provided by their sudden decision to unload the munition ships M V Swat berthed at Chittagong Port Preparatory to this desion, Brigadier Mazumdar a Bengali officer commanding

women and children had been butchered Dacca had been turned into an inferno with fires raging in most corners of the garrison in Chittagong had been suddenly removed from his command and replaced by a West Pakistani. On 24th night he was flown to Dacca under armed escort and has probably been executed Under the new command notice was given to local authorities of the decision to unload the ship inspite of the fact that the army had abstained from doing so far the last 17 days in the face of non cooperation from the port workers The decision to unload was a calculated provocation which immediately brought 1 00 000 people on the streets of Chittagong and led to massive firing by the Army to break their way out The issue was raised by the Awami League with General Peerzada as to why this escalation was being permitted whilst talks were still going on He gave no answer beyond a promise to pass it on to General Yahya

Following the final meeting between General Yahya s and Awami League s advisers on 24th March where Mr M M Ahmed passed on his amendments a call was awaited from General Peerzada for a final session where the draft could be finalised No such call materialised and instead it was learnt that Mr M M Ahmed who was central to the negotiations had suddenly left for Karachi on the 25th morning without any warning to the Awami League team

By 11 P M of the 25 h all preparations were ready and the troops began to take up their positions in the city In an act of treachery unparalled in contemporary history a programme of calculated genocide was unleashed on the peaceful and unsuspecting population of Dacca by midnight of 25th March No ultimatum was given to the Awami League by Yahya no curfew order was even issued when the machine gun artillery and cannot on the tanks unleashed their reign of death and destruction. By the time the first Martial Law Proclamations issued by Lt General Tikka Khan were broadcast the next morning some 50 000 people most of them without offering any resistance, and many

the city Sleeping inhabitants who had been drawn from their homes by the fires started by the military were machine gunned as they ran to escape the flames

Whilst the Police EPR and armed volunteers put up a heroic resistance the main victims remained the weak the innocent and the unsuspecting who were killed at random in their thousands We are compiling a first hand account of the details of genocide committeed by the Pakistan Army on the orders of the President of Pakistan which we will publish shortly The scale and brutality of the action exceeds anything preperated in the civilised world

Yahya himself left Dacca on the night of 25th March after having unl ashed the Pakistan Army with an open licence to commit genocide on all Bengalis His own justification for this act of barbarism was not forthcoming till 8 P M the next day when the world was given its first explanation for the unleashing of this holocaust The statement was self contradictory and laced with positive lines His branding of a party as traitors and outlaws with whom he had only 48 hours ago been negotiating for a peaceful transfer of power bore no relationship to the situation in Bangla Desh or the course of the negotiations His promise to hand over power to the elected representatives of the people after banning the Awami league which was the sole representative of Bangla Desh and held a majority of seats in the National Assembly was a mockery of the freely recorded voice of 75 million Bengalis The crudity of the statement was clear evidence that Yahya was no longer interested in taking shelter behind either logic of morality and had reverted to the law of the jungle in his bid to crush the people of Bangla Desh

Pakistan is now dead and buried under a mountain of corpses The hundreds and thousands of people murdered by the army in Bangle Desh will act as an impenetrable barrier between West Pakistan and the people of Bangla Desh By re orting to pre planned genocide Yahya must have known that he was himself digging Pakistans grave,

The subsequent massacres prepetrated on his orders by his licensed killers on the people were not designed to preserve the unity of a nation They were acts of racial hatred and sadism devoid of even the elements of humanity Profes sional soldiers on orders violated their code of military honour and were *seen as beasts of prey who indulged in an* orgy of murder rape loot arson and destruction unequal led in the annals of civilisation These acts indicate that the concept of two countr es is already deeply rooted in the minds of Yahya and his associates who would not dare commit such atrocities on their own countrymen

Yahya s genocide is thus without political purpose It serves only as the last act in the tragic history of Pakistan which Yahya has chosen to write with the blood of the people of Bangla Desh The objective is genocide and scorched earth before his troops are either driven out or peri h In this time he hopes to liquidate our political leadership intelligentsia and administration to destroy our *industries and public amenities and as a final act he intends* to raze out cities to the ground Already his occupation Army has made substantial progress towards this objective Bangla Desh will be set back 50 years as West Pakistan s parting gift to a people they have exploited for twenty three years for their own benefit

This is a point of Major significance to those great powers who choose to ignore this largest single act of genocide since the days of Belson and Auschwitz If they think they are preserving the uni y of Pakistan they can forget it becau e Yahya himself has no illusion about the future of Pakistan

They must realise that Pakistan is dead murdered by Yahya—and that independent Bangla De h is a reality sustained by the indestructible will and courage of 75 million Bengalis who are *daily nurturing the roots of this* new nationhood with their blood No power on earth can un make this new nation and sooner or later both big and small powers will have to accept it into the world *fraternity*

It is therefore in the interest of politics as much as humanity for the big powers to put their full pressure on Yahya to cage his killers and bring them back to West Pakistan We will be eternally grateful to the people of the USSR and India and the freedom loving people of all the countries for their full support they have already given us in this struggle We would welcome similar support from the People s Republic of China USA France and Great Britain and others. Each in their own way should exercise considerable leverage on West Pakistan and were they to exercise this influence Yahya could not sustain his war of aggression against Bangla Desh for a single day longer

Bangla Desh will be the eighth most populous country in the world Its only goal will be to rebuild a new nation from the ashes and carnage left behind by Yahya s occupation army It will be a stupendous task because we are already one of the world s poorest nations But we now have a cause and a people who have been hardened in the resistance who have shed their blood for their nation and won their freedom in an epic struggle which pitted unarmed people against a modern army Such a nation cannot fail in its task of securing the foundations of its nationhood

In our struggle for survival we seek the friendship of all people the big powers and the small We do not aspire to join any bloc or pact but will seek assistance from those who give it in a spirit of goodwill free from any desire to control our destinies We have struggled far too long for our self-determination to permit our elves to become anyone s satellite

We now appeal to the nations of the world for recognition and assistance both material and moral in our struggle for nationhood Every day this is delayed a thousand lives are lost and more of Bangla Desh s vital assets destroyed In the name of Humanity act now and earn our undying friendship

This we now present to the world as the CASE of the people of Bangla Desh No nation has a greater right to recognition no people have fought harder for this right

—*Joi Bangla*

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